

*FACING FEMININITIES:
WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, 1856-1899*

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ABSTRACT

The National Portrait Gallery was founded in 1856 as a civic amenity which would develop a national citizenry through its representation of national history. How, where, and why women and their images were included in this enterprise is the central concern of this thesis. Exploring the Portrait Gallery's situation in the social and geographical landscape of London suggests that the 'nation' it was intended to address was the political nation, a nation apparently circumscribed by Parliament, suffrage and masculinity. The Trustees appointed to identify and select appropriate acquisitions for the Portrait Gallery worked within professional contexts, and with scholarly resources, which were similarly gendered. Although formed within a context of male privilege, at the end of 1899 the collection of the National Portrait Gallery included one hundred and thirty-seven portraits of women. The three central chapters of the thesis describe and analyse the collection of female portraits with particular attention to how they were selected and used to articulate a history of women in the nation: a chapter on portraits of women belonging to the royal family identifies the significance of royal women and their (legitimate) reproduction in constructing a historical narrative in the Gallery; a chapter on 'beauties' explores the representation of an archaic female sexuality in the collection, and relates this to 'beauty' as a (changing) mode of signification in the nineteenth century; the twinned issues of personal beauty and aesthetic beauty are discussed finally as they surface in the collection of portraits of female authors, who represented women in the present and the culmination of female historical 'progress'. Having outlined the representation of a national femininity in the collection of women's portraits, the final chapter of the thesis explores how the Portrait Gallery's categories of gender worked when applied to its audience, and how living women who visited the collection became part of the National Portrait Gallery.

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This work is dedicated to the memory of
John David Nicholson (1957-1995)
tutor in courage, and top geek

INTRODUCTION

Women, the national and the gallery

After forty years of temporary exhibition, in April 1896 the English National Portrait Gallery extended a general invitation to view its collection in a new, purpose-built gallery on St. Martin's Place in central London. Visitors entering the building found themselves in the company of a great many women: in the relatively modest Gallery, more than one hundred portraits of women were collected. Ranging from the imposing large state portraits of Queen Anne to delicately figured Elizabethan miniatures, from Van Dyck's charming oil portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria to nineteenth-century ladies' watercolours, the Portrait Gallery's collection comprised a wide array of portraits and sitters. The portraits represented women as diverse as the morally serious and scholarly novelist George Eliot; Anna Maria, Duchess of Shrewsbury, a Restoration lady more notorious than famous for standing by her lover in a duel with her husband; and the modest and companionable Mrs. Anne Flaxman, wife to sculptor John.¹ Eclectic and colourful, the collection of women's portraits illustrated a dynamic history of English women for the nation.

While welcome, this ebullieny of historical women cannot be taken as a straightforward recognition of the varieties of women's historical experience. The Portrait Gallery was formed to cultivate

¹Anne Denman Flaxman's portrait (NPG 675) was given as gift along with that of her husband's (NPG 674) by Theodore Martin, who wrote to the Gallery on 16 May 1883 that he had purchased them from a Miss Denman, presumably a relation of Mrs. Flaxman. The portraits were hung in a single frame which was lettered with their names and dates, including the date of their marriage, a successful partnership which was described in the Portrait Gallery's catalogue as important to John Flaxman's success as an artist: see the *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts & c. in the National Portrait Gallery*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1888), v. I: 171. John Flaxman's household included his sister Mary Ann, also an artist, whose portrait (NPG 1715) was not acquired until 1913 and hence is not discussed in this thesis, but the different attention accorded to the two Flaxman women is characteristic of the period addressed. For further detail and discussion of each of these acquisitions see for Anne Denman Flaxman and other companion portraits Chapter two section V; for George Eliot (NPG 669, known by the Portrait Gallery as Mary Ann Cross) Chapter four especially section III; for Anna Maria Shrewsbury (NPG 280) Chapter three especially section II.

the historical sense that could be developed by comparing and contrasting the portraits and sitters of different periods; the collection's apparent eclecticism of image and imaged was programmatic rather than accidental. The Portrait Gallery's collection represented women who lived vastly different lives and were represented in diverse ways, but the legacy of each portrait and the life it connoted was uprooted, transported and in some senses transformed by being placed in a national collection of historical portraits.² By virtue of being placed in a national gallery the portrait of Mrs. Anne Flaxman represented something (if not also someone) considerably different than when hung on the wall of her marital home.³

Ideally, when placed in the National Portrait Gallery the portrait of Mrs. Flaxman continued to invoke the particular historical person Anne Flaxman, and to remind the spectator of the specific conditions of her life and the ways that she engaged with them. In this sense, her image functioned hagiographically, as an invitation to admire an exceptional individual.⁴ But to focus exclusively on the National

²Work in museum history and theory has convincingly demonstrated that the specific contexts of museums work to invite (or command) particular interpretations and readings of the objects placed within them. See, for example, Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, (London: Routledge, 1995) and Annie E. Coombes, 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities', *Oxford Art Journal*, 1988, 11(2): 57-68. For a study of the function of portraiture in a particular context see Karen Stanworth 'Picturing a Personal History: the Case of Edward Onslow', *Art History*, September 1993, 16(3): 408-423. This thesis is concerned to identify the 'value added' to women's portraiture through its collection by the Portrait Gallery; it can be usefully juxtaposed with Marcia Pointon's *Strategies for Showing: Women, Possession and Representation in English Visual Culture 1665-1800*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), which studies women's portraiture in its pre-museological context.

³Its status as a family portrait, hung in the Flaxmans' home in Buckingham Street, was recorded in the catalogue description of the portrait: see for example *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts & c. in the National Portrait Gallery*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1888), v. I: 171.

⁴For reasons which are discussed mainly in Chapters one and two, this thesis is concerned primarily with portraiture as a means of representing a person's biography and character, rather than their physical likeness. Like most aspects of portraiture, the operations of this distinction have not received much written attention, although Joanna Woodall's introduction to *Portraiture: Facing the subject* (Manchester and New York: M.U.P., 1997): 1-28 and some of the essays it collects are helpful on the social correspondence between sitter and portrait. For a theoretical study which embraces literary and visual portraiture see Wendy Steiner, 'The Semiotics of a Genre: Portraiture in Literature and Painting', *Semiotica*, 1977, 21(1/2): 111-119; a historically specific study of an earlier relationship between biography and portraiture has been produced by Richard Wendorf in *The Elements of Life*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990). For studies in the problem of physical likeness in *Facing Femininities: Introduction*

Portrait Gallery's celebration of the unique is misleading, and perhaps to misunderstand the institution. Its use of the term 'national' directs us to consider it as the representation of a social body as well as a group of individuals: the sitters or portraits collected by the Gallery were understood to be relevant to, and to represent, a notional grouping the 'nation'. Biographical representation, especially that of the nineteenth century, must sometimes be understood as a mediating device for understanding relationships between the general and the particular, and read in ways that do not exclusively invoke the individual biographised.⁵ The main object of this thesis is to investigate the portraits of women collected by the National Portrait Gallery in that context, and to understand the claims about the history of English women that were being made through them.⁶

Those claims and the ambitions of the National Portrait Gallery must be situated in the context of a formal nineteenth-century culture of nationalism, national identity and the state.⁷ The Portrait

portraiture see Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, (London: Reaktion Press, 1991) and T.H Breen, 'The Meaning of "likeness": American portrait painting in an eighteenth century consumer society', *Word and Image*, 1990, 6(4):325-350.

⁵Paul Barlow, whose work on portraiture and the Portrait Gallery has been an important resource for this thesis, has persuasively suggested that in the nineteenth century portraiture served to 'humanise modernity...to bridge the gap between the complexity of modern society and the experience of individual identity'. Quoted from 'Facing the past and present: the National Portrait Gallery and the search for "authentic" portraiture', in Joanna Woodall, *Portraiture*: 221.

⁶Finding ways of making what might be described as sociological readings through biographical material speaks to a contentious question of whether biography is an appropriate vehicle for feminist history. Kathryn Dodd argues that as historiography, biography sustains the very practices that make most women historically anonymous in 'Cultural Politics and Women's Historical Writing: The Case of Ray Strachey's *The Cause*', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 1990, 13(1/2): 127-137. A cogently argued case for biographical studies in feminist work has recently been made by Anne Middleton Wagner in *Three Artists (Three Women): Modernism and the Art of Hesse, Krasner, and O'Keefe*, (London and Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996): 2-10. An account of the fate of biography in within recent forms of feminist history, and arguments in its favour, are given in the introduction to Sarah Alpern, Joyce Antler, Elisabeth Israels Perry, and Ingrid Winther Scobie, eds., *The Challenge of Feminist Biography: Writing the Lives of Modern American Women*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992): 1-15.

⁷The most influential text for theorising these problems is Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. (revised edition, London and New York: Verso, 1991). This, and other surveys of the problem like Eric Hobsbawms's *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (Cambridge: C.U.P./Canto, 1990) are gender blind; feminist treatments of the national have tended to be at a local level and do not attempt comparable overarching theorisations. The 'national' of this thesis has thus been theorised piecemeal with reference to Anderson *et al*, to *Facing Femininities*: Introduction

Gallery was (and is) a state-sponsored institution, administered by Prime Ministerial appointees and funded by Parliament, an institution whose very title proclaims its status as an instrument of national life. The national galleries and museums were founded and shaped by Parliament in the midst of a period which saw a substantial renegotiation of its conception of the nation, and were clearly intended as interventions in that process. The Portrait Gallery was invoked by a 'modernising' Parliament which was deeply concerned with defining the extent - and the gender - of the nation.⁸ The object of the Gallery was to construct a representation of national history that was consistent with the nation as it was conceived within the community of parliamentary politicians. The predominantly masculine structures and aspirations of the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery calls for a cautious and critical account of its representation of women.

One of the central problems addressed in this thesis is the disjunction whereby women were excluded from the management, but included in the collection, of the National Portrait Gallery (one example of the curious logic of women in the Portrait Gallery). The history of the Portrait Gallery has not been extensively researched, and never in ways which expose the work of gender in its collection or administration.⁹ This is not unusual; while general texts of

gendered local studies, and to feminist theory which has been developed in other contexts.

⁸The expanding suffrage is familiar as a central feature of nineteenth century political history; what is less familiar is the discussion of gender outside of the campaign for female suffrage. See Catherine Hall, *White, Male, Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) and 'Rethinking Imperial Histories: the Reform Act of 1867', *New Left Review*, December 1994, 208: 3-29; Keith McClelland, 'Rational and Respectable Man', in Laura Frader and Sonya O. Rose, eds., *Gender and Class in Modern Europe*, (London and Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996): 280-293.

⁹Published work which deals with the history of the National Portrait Gallery includes Paul Barlow, 'Facing the past and present: the National Portrait Gallery and the search for "authentic" portraiture' in Woodall, ed., *Portraiture* and 'The Imagined Hero As Incarnate Sign: Thomas Carlyle and the Mythology of the National Portrait in Victorian Britain', *Art History* 1994, 17(4): 517-545; Marcia Pointon, 'Epilogue: "Saved from the housekeeper's room": the foundation of the National Portrait Gallery, London' in *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth Century England*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1993): 227-244. The history of the Portrait Gallery is also the subject of unpublished theses by Uta Kornmeier, 'Faces and Figures. A Museological Comparison between Madame Tussaud's and the National Portrait Gallery,' M.A., Courtauld Institute of Art, 1995; Elizabeth Coutts, 'Between History and Art: the Foundation of the National Portrait Gallery', M.A., Birkbeck College, 1994; and Eileen R. Hooper-Greenhill, 'The National Portrait Gallery: A Facing Femininities: Introduction

museum history often at least raise questions about gender, the histories of specific institutions rarely account for it.¹⁰ Although interest in the 'social' histories of galleries and museums has run high in the last decade, institutional histories are often written in terms of class, an obvious focus given that many exhibiting institutions themselves claimed to work within those categories.¹¹ Questions of gender are occluded because women's participation at the innovative and administrative level of national exhibiting institutions in the nineteenth century was nearly invisible; their absence at the administrative level contributes to the impression that masculinity was an unmediated and uncontested condition of museum and gallery history.¹²

This gendered structure is a familiar feature of many nineteenth-century Britain's 'public' or 'national' institutions. Studies of the 'national' which investigate the formal apparatus of nationality and citizenship find little in the way of vocabulary with which to articulate women's roles. Jane Mackay and Pat Thane, in their article on the Englishwoman 1880-1920, note that 'one of the distinctions between male and female was that the concept of nationality was

Case-Study in Cultural Reproduction', M.A., London University, Institute of Education, 1980. None of these displays more than a passing interest in gender.

¹⁰Notable exceptions, which still mainly concern gender in collections rather than institutions as a whole, include Gaby Porter, 'Seeing through Solidity: a feminist perspective on museums', *Theorizing Museums*, eds., Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991): 105-126, and 'How are women represented in British history museums?' *Museum*, 1991, 43(3): 159-62, also Irit Rogoff, 'From Ruins to Debris: the Feminization of Fascism in German-History Museums', *Museum Culture*, Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., (London: Routledge, 1994): 223-249. General works on museums which take gender into consideration include Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, (London: Routledge, 1995): 201-208 and Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, especially pp. 102-132. The best collection of administrative histories for the period are those in Marcia Pointon, ed., *Art Apart: Art Institutions and Ideology Across England and North America*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), none of which uses gender as a primary analytic tool.

¹¹See for example Colin Trodd, 'Culture, class, city: the National Gallery, London and the spaces of education, 1822-57', in Pointon ed., *Art Apart*: 33-49, or Vera L. Zolberg, '"An Elite Experience for Everyone": Art Museums, the Public, and Cultural Literacy', in Sherman and Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture*, 49-65.

¹²Women did work as administrators in philanthropic museums in the capital, although their historians have not analysed the gender politics of their involvement. See Giles Waterfield, ed., *Art for the People*, (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1994) on the South London Gallery and Seth Koven, 'The Whitechapel Picture Exhibitions and the Politics of Seeing', Sherman and Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture*: 23-47.

almost always on the male side of the divide.’¹³ When Raphael Samuel wrote in his preface to *Patriotism* that ‘ideologically, [women] were the objects rather than the subjects of patriotism: those for whom wars were fought; those whom legislation protected; those whom “the nation” honoured precisely because of their exclusion from the public sphere,’ he neatly summed up the role accorded to women in the nineteenth-century state; but observations like these should suggest not that women were excluded or absent from national life, but should rather draw our attention to how the private functioned as a description of their role within it.¹⁴

The private and the feminine were not absent from the national, but were crucial terms in the model which founded the nation: the patriarchal family or household. Anne McClintock has observed that the structure of the family provided a useful model for conceiving the nation firstly by ‘sanctioning social *hierarchy* within a putative organic unity of interests’ and secondly by presenting ‘a “natural” trope for figuring historical *time*’.¹⁵ As in the family history and

¹³Jane Mackay and Pat Thane, ‘The Englishwoman’, *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880 - 1920*, eds. Robert Colls and Philip Dodd, (London: Croom Helm, 1986): 191.

¹⁴Raphael Samuel, Preface to *Patriotism: the Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), V. I: xiv. The dichotomy between the ‘public’ and ‘private’ here requires a deconstruction of the sort undertaken by feminist theorists in other contexts. See for instance Carole Pateman, ‘Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy’, in *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989): 118-140 and Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, eds., *Feminists Theorize the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992). Studies of women and gender in ‘national’ life which work against the grain of the opposition include Kate Davies, ‘Living Muses: The Politics of Embodiment 1750-1780’, M.A., University of York, 1995; Jane Rendall, ed., *Equal or Different: Women’s Politics 1800-1914*, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall’s *Family Fortunes: Men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Wollstonecraft’s Daughters. Womanhood in England and France, 1780-1920*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (Yale University Press 1992, reprinted London: Pimlico, 1994): 237-282; Hall, *White, Male, Middle-Class*; Lara Perry, ‘The privileges of patriotism: femininity and national identity in the Englishwoman’s Review of Social and Industrial Questions of the 1880s’, M.A., University of British Columbia, 1994.

¹⁵Anne McClintock, ‘Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family’, *Feminist Review*, Summer 1993, 44: 63. Glenda Sluga develops the idea in the most recent work on femininity and nationality in this period, ‘Identity, gender, and the history of European nations and nationalism’, *Nations and Nationalism*, January 1998, 4(1): 87-112, but insists that this meant women had a stunted relationship to the nation; Lynn Hunt makes a comparison between the structures of nation and family when she poses a psychic relationship between them in *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, (London: Routledge, *Facing Femininities*: Introduction

structure which provided the nation's model, women as wives, mothers, daughters (and servants) had a crucial role in sustaining and reproducing that unit, even though that work was done in private.¹⁶ The hypothesis that the nation was conceived of as a kind of corporate family explains why women's relationship to the nation and the state during the nineteenth century so often concerned their sexuality.¹⁷ That there should be a feminine which sustained the boundaries of patriarchy, sexual and otherwise, was essential to the conception of the nation and to the National Portrait Gallery.

The feminine is and was essential to the nation-state; the female not necessarily so.¹⁸ But the female national subject of this study is not so elusive as she is in many cases: almost uniquely amongst nineteenth-century organs of state, the Portrait Gallery's collection directly acknowledged women as part of national history and national life. History, as it was conceived in the 1850s, still concerned all of what has subsequently been polarised around the divisions between the historical and the sentimental; the public and private; masculine

1992); another consideration of the (familial) role of women in conceiving of the nation see Michael Ragussis, 'The Birth of a Nation in Victorian Culture: The Spanish Inquisition, the Converted Daughter, and the "Secret Race"', *Critical Inquiry* Spring 1994, 20: 477-508.

¹⁶The most influential text on gender and the family in this period is Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes*; their discussion of the Queen Caroline affair hints at the way that family values were transposed to the national stage in the early-nineteenth century (155).

¹⁷This case is cogently argued by Lynn Hunt in her editor's introduction to *Eroticism and the Body Politic*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1991): 1-5; George L. Mosse's *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*, (New York: Howard Fertig, 1985) explores some of the issues around sexuality and nationality without either speculating about the structure of their relationship or having much of an interest in its impact on women. For studies of ways that the English state interested itself in women's sexuality see Anna Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', *History Workshop Journal*, 1978(5): 9-65; Lucy Bland, "'Cleansing the portals of life": the venereal disease campaign in the early twentieth century', *Crises in the British State, 1880-1930*, eds., Mary Langan and Bill Schwarz, (London: Hutchinson, 1985): 192-209.

¹⁸Robert Dodds observes in his essay 'Englishness and the national culture', in *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880 - 1920*, that the absence of women in certain contexts could be 'remedied by reconstituting male relationships within the institution' (5), but it was an absence which needed to be negotiated. One way that femininity and women have historically been recognised as part of the 'national' is allegorically: see Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form*, (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1985). The reasons why allegorical representation was resisted in England during this period are discussed in Chapter one.

and feminine.¹⁹ The Portrait Gallery's administrators drew on and reproduced elements of existing histories from diverse sources, some of which were literally family histories (crucially, the history of the royal family) and some of which concerned women and femininity in other contexts. These kinds of materials were used by the Trustees in performing their two most important duties, which were to identify potential candidates for inclusion in the Gallery, and to verify portrait likenesses. The existing culture of historical documentation and representation introduced women as legitimate subjects for the collection of the National Portrait Gallery.

In the nineteenth century, women had a lively presence in many forms of historical representation, although early forms of women's history are still not well-understood: they rarely register either as part of feminist history, or as part of the origins of disciplinary history.²⁰ The literature of women's history was also unfortunately overlooked by Christina Crosby in the only monograph study of women in nineteenth-century historiography, *The Ends of History: the Victorians and the Woman Question* (1991). Crosby makes the useful distinction between the (masculine) 'disciplined' and the (feminised) 'sentimental' in nineteenth-century history, but fails to investigate the role of sentimental history within the nineteenth-century historical imagination.²¹ Often biographical and frequently

¹⁹Studies of Victorian historiography which discuss the disciplinisation of historical writing include Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and David Amigoni, *Victorian Biography: Intellectuals and the Ordering of Discourse*, (London and New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993).

²⁰Late twentieth-century feminist historians often link their own interest in women's history with their political awakening by the women's movement in the late 1960s, and give genealogies of women's history according to that periodization: see for example Sarah Alpern *et al* or Catherine Hall's opening essay in *White, Male, Middle-Class*. Historians attending to the longer genealogy of women's history include Bonnie G. Smith, 'The Contribution of Women to Modern Historiography in Great Britain, France and the United States, 1750-1940', *American Historical Review*, 1984, 89: 709-732; Natalie Zemon Davis in 'Gender and Genre: Women As Historical Writers, 1400-1820', Patricia H. Labalme, ed., *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, (New York and London: 1980): 153-182; and Nina Baym, 'Between Enlightenment and Victorian: Toward a Narrative of American Women Writers Writing History', *Critical Inquiry*, Autumn 1991, 18: 22-41; Jane Rendall, 'Writing History for British Women: Elizabeth Hamilton and the Memoirs of Agrippina', in Orr, ed., *Wollstonecraft's Daughters. Womanhood in England and France 1780-1920* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995): 79-93. The names and works of some of the many nineteenth-century historians of women in English will be found in the bibliography to this thesis.

²¹Rather, she draws the conclusion that the feminine was constructed as the ahistorical 'other' to progressing masculinity. The most relevant chapter is *Facing Femininities: Introduction*

delivered in emotive and instructive language, it is easy to overlook a quantity of contemporary texts and images as 'historical' because they do not appear to meet current (supposed) standards of historical objectivity.

In visual, as well as literary, nineteenth-century representations of history, the past frequently appears as a motif which is adapted wholesale into what are now evidently nineteenth-century narratives about femininity. Roy Strong's observation that the contemporary conventions of history painting allowed 'Mary Queen of Scots, Lady Jane Grey and Henrietta Maria [to be cast] as examples of the perfect Victorian gentlewoman' suggests one direction of Victorian historical revisionism, and Augustus Egg's rendering of the formidable Queen Elizabeth as a pouting court beauty in his 1848 canvas *Queen Elizabeth Discovers She is no Longer Young* suggests a different, but no less ideological, revision.²² Characters and (imagined) episodes from the past were treated flexibly by popular historical biography and history painting to accord with contemporary notions of femininity and feminine behaviour: Nicola Watson observes that 'both genres were fascinated alike by the feminine, domestic, anecdotal and biographical as the underside of the more officially historical,' especially 'as morally exemplary narrative directed at girls and young women.'²³

'Henry Esmond and the subject of history' (44-68), the only chapter in which she considers what she calls a work of history 'proper', namely Macaulay's *History of England*, as opposed to novels. This conclusion is similarly drawn by Tony Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*: 39, and (curiously) by Anne McClintock in 'Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family': 66.

²²Roy Strong, *And When Did You Last See Your Father?* (n.p.: Thames and Hudson, 1978): 45; Egg's canvas is reproduced on p. 63. See also Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'The Domestication of History', in *Problem Pictures: Women and Men in Victorian Painting*, (Aldershot: Scolar, 1995): 95-112; and note the ease with which a few historical pictures are integrated into Susan P. Casteras' *Images of Victorian Womanhood in English Art*, (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1987).

²³Nicola J. Watson, 'Gloriana Victoriana: Victoria and the cultural memory of Elizabeth I', in Margaret Homans and Adrienne Munich, eds., *Remaking Queen Victoria*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1997): 81 and Judith Rowbotham on 'History with a Purpose' in *Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction*, (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989): 146-178. Christina Crosby's observation that 'feminized history contests disciplined history by focusing precisely on what the latter must eliminate' (60), meaning the sentimental and emotional, makes a similar distinction, but fails to acknowledge that the sentimental and emotional were also understood to have a history, if a circumscribed one.

This signals an important quality of the varieties of nineteenth-century historiography as they were referred to and influential within the Portrait Gallery. Historiography, in literary and visual forms, and the ways that women were represented within it had already been subjected to a gendered regime. Histories of women were often written and painted in relation to conventions of femininity, as an investigation of the qualities of the sentimental and feminine in past (and present) society. The gendering of women within the overall production of historiographical material was uneven or even contradictory; but aspects of existing historiographies could be adapted piecemeal into the narrative constructed by the National Portrait Gallery's collection. In taking up received forms of history and referring to existing historical documents, the administrators of the Portrait Gallery were tailoring an existing set of gendered values to a specific (national) purpose.

Constructing an account of the National Portrait Gallery's nineteenth-century collection of women's portraits is thus not straightforwardly a problem of dealing with 'images of women': the conception of national history which informed contemporary historiography, and the vision of the gendered nation which it produced, had an important impact on the fashioning of the collection.²⁴ While the portraits of women are the central interest of this thesis, interpreting the reasons why those images were collected, and the impact they made within the collection as whole, depends on understanding several aspects of the historical context in which the

²⁴The term 'images of women' is an allusion specifically to Griselda Pollock's demand, 'What's Wrong with "Images of Women"?' (1977), reprinted in Roszika Parker and Griselda Pollock, eds., *Framing Feminism, Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985*, (London: Pandora, 1987): 132-38, which asserted the importance of attending to the relation between the lives of women and the way they are portrayed. Individually and as a collaborator with Roszika Parker in *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981) and Deborah Cherry in 'Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature: A Study of the Representation of Elizabeth Siddall', *Art History*, June 1984, 7(2): 206-227, her work has made a substantial contribution to the theory and practice of dealing art historically with images of women. Useful guides and resources in studying 'images of women' in England during the period covered by this thesis are Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Marcia Pointon, *Naked Authority: The Body in Western Painting 1830-1908*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Ann Bermingham, 'The Picturesque and ready-to-wear femininity', *The Politics of the Picturesque*, eds. Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1994): 81-119 and 'The Aesthetics of Ignorance: The Accomplished Woman in the Culture of Connoisseurship', *Oxford Art Journal*, 1993, 16(2): 3-20; and Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude*.

collection was developed. This includes not only contextual forms of representation (e.g. historical writing), but also the interests and activities of living men and women in forming, administering, and visiting the Gallery.

To ask a question about women 'in' the National Portrait Gallery is thus to encounter many different senses of the word *in*, or rather, many different senses of the word *women*. Different aspects of this inquiry involve considering the involvement of living women who visited, but were not included in the administration of, the Gallery; the portraits of historical women included in the collection; and the standards of femininity according to which those portraits and their sitters were evaluated. But women in each of these senses - as gallery visitors; as portraits; and as the putative 'other' of national masculinities - clearly belong to different ontological categories. The differences between the senses of women engaged by this project are on the order of the differences between apples, oranges and footballs. Weaving them together into a coherent account presents a considerable challenge and some methodological difficulties.

In the context of feminist historiography, each of the senses in which 'women' contributed to the history of the Portrait Gallery is most easily (and obviously) treated as a discrete historical problem, since methodologies and projects in feminist history have tended to embrace only one ontology of women in history. Women's historians have worked hard over decades to recover and describe the lives of women through history. Gender historians have argued that simply recovering women's experience is neither possible nor politically expedient, and that analysis of the limitations imposed by gender is a more productive task; researchers in this field are often most interested by the use of gendered language, and how it sustained gendered practice.²⁵ These often include studies of linguistic imagery, but feminist analysis of visual images of women have generally been undertaken by art historians, whose theoretical tools, analytical interests and periodisations often differ substantially from

²⁵Debates over the appropriate objects and subjects of feminist history have emerged in many contexts, and were recently rehearsed with feeling in the *Women's History Review*. See Joan Hoff, 'Gender as a postmodern category of paralysis' in *Women's History Review*, 1994, 3(2): 149-168; also Susan Kingsley Kent's reply, 'Mistrials and Diatribulations: a reply to Joan Hoff', *Women's History Review*, 1996 5(1): 9-18 (and others in the same issue) for a sense of the debate and references to key texts in its historiography.

those used by historians.²⁶ The differences between the objects of study, and the methodologies, of various forms of feminist history have sometimes worked to alienate them from one another. In order to understand the roles accorded to 'women' in the National Portrait Gallery - as sitters but not Trustees, as novelists but not as suffragists; as the majority of visitors but as a tiny minority of artists - different methodologies of women's history have been brought together.

Proposing a theoretical or methodological structure for a comprehensive form of women's history is far beyond the ambitions of this thesis, but of necessity it draws on several models of feminist history which are suitable to investigating 'women' in the Gallery. This has involved making methodological compromises, since it has not been possible to within the limits of this project to research the project in a way which is entirely consistent with the theory that underpins it. For instance, the argument for the influence of gender in the collection is not based on a comprehensive assessment of the representation of both masculinity and femininity in the collection; rather, the representation of femininity in the collection is seen as a response to the masculinities of the collectors. And although this is a thesis which concerns women's history, readers will find that a significant portion of the work is given over to the study of men. Various methodologies and objects of feminist analysis are juxtaposed in sometimes unlikely ways, to produce a whole which is not consistent with any one.

²⁶A pertinent example is the problem of the 'modern' referred to above. While art historians are reasonably clear that the 'modern' - as signified by certain kinds of painting practice - begins sometime between 1850 and 1914, historians are more likely to periodise the 'modern' starting in the mid-eighteenth century, referring to the Enlightenment or industrial revolution as the key events. Thomas Richards' *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle 1851-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990) is a rare example of a historical text which attempts to use art historical periodisation of the 'modern'. Another significant disciplinary difference negotiated in this thesis is its reference to psychoanalytic theory; where psychoanalysis as an analytical tool has generally been regarded as contentious by historians (see for example the 'Special Feature: Psychoanalysis and History', *History Workshop*, 1988, 26: 102-152), art historians often borrow its conceptual vocabulary and analytical processes, particularly when dealing with problems of sexual difference: see for example Pollock, *Vision and Difference* and Pointon in *Naked Authority: The Body in Western Painting 1830-1908*.

But no one unified methodological approach to women's history is competent to deal with an object of research that simultaneously embraces images of (historical) women, living women, and the absence of women. The rationale for taking this patchwork approach is that it is an understanding of the relationships between 'women' in their different ontological states which has the power to explain the role of 'women' in the National Portrait Gallery, and that different ontologies of women are related or at least comparable by virtue of being objects of exchange in the production and consumption of the category 'women'.²⁷ What is subjected to study here is an economy of the meaning of 'women', one which embraces various kinds of things being subjected to various sorts of processes, but which is at least notionally unified by its limited historical context and an apparently common referent. The guiding objective of this thesis is to trace the shape of a knowledge of 'women' (living, represented, and imagined) as it was produced and reproduced in the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery.

The historical event (the collection of portraits of women) investigated by this thesis is therefore primarily synchronic, rather than diachronic. While the event it investigates occurred over a period of time, its causes and effects are not principally 'before' and 'after' in time: cause, event and effect were concurrent rather than consecutive, and do not resolve into a conventional historical narrative.²⁸ Each of the chapters deals with the whole of the nominated period, and covers one topic or context in which the Portrait Gallery consumed and produced knowledge of sexual difference. The material is arranged in this way in order to try and

²⁷This proposition was influentially expressed by Denise Riley, who writes that the positioning of females as 'women' 'occurs both in language, forms of description, and what gets carried out, so that it is misleading to set up a combat for superiority between the two'. She also cautions that it is inappropriate to assume a complete identification between different ontologies of 'women', and that it is the relationship between living women and representations of women that is investigated here. Denise Riley, *'Am I That Name?' Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History*, (London: Macmillan, 1988):3.

²⁸Now a relatively common historiographical practice, this kind of historical explanation is mainly associated with what is frequently termed 'cultural history', particularly as it has been influenced by structuralist, and then post-structuralist, anthropology (Levi-Strauss), linguistics (Saussure), and semiotics (Barthes). For discussions of these influences in current academic practice see, for example, Aletta Biersack, 'Local Knowledge, Local History: Geertz and Beyond', in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History*, (Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1989): 72-96, or Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

trace the processes of cause and effect in the formation of the collection, from its point of origin (the context in which it was founded) to its point of termination (the affect it had on the visitor): its narrative does not have a *temporal* end, hence the more or less arbitrary closing date of 1899. This history has been devised to give an account of the construction of the Portrait Gallery's collection in an order which follows the role of 'women' in the processes of the collection's production and consumption.

While reconstructing the role accorded to 'women' within the 'national' purpose or cause of the National Portrait Gallery is the informing ambition of this thesis, it is also one of its major stumbling blocks. The specific (national) purpose of the Portrait Gallery, and the version of national history which it planned to present, can only be inferred from thin and largely collateral evidence. Apart from some very general statements made in parliamentary debates in the 1850s, the materials which document the nineteenth-century history of the Portrait Gallery are frustratingly silent on the intentions of its administrators in forming and presenting the collection. The 'nation' or 'public' for which the Gallery was created are notoriously amorphous terms, and the documents of the Gallery do little to circumscribe them. Its rules for the acquisition of portraits were few and, judging by the number of exceptions made to the rules, do not seem to have much inhibited the judgements of administrators in refusing or accepting portraits; moreover, the reasons for their judgements were not recorded as part of the institutional documentation and are only infrequently revealed in personal correspondence. The first two chapters are thus concerned with pinpointing the specific gendered conditions under which the Gallery selected and displayed its collection.

The decisions which shaped the collection and its presentation were made by an all-male Board of Trustees who were appointed primarily from the leaders of political and artistic establishments of London. The Board of Trustees was chaired from 1856 - 75 by the fifth Earl Stanhope, a politician and historian; from 1876 - 94 by Viscount Hardinge, the artist son of the famous imperial hero Hardinge of Lahore; by Philip Sidney, Baron De L'Isle and Dudley between 1895 and 1898; and for ten years from 1898 by Arthur Wellesley, Viscount Peel, the son of Sir Robert Peel (a full list of the

Trustees and their interests and affiliations is Appendix 1 to this thesis). The Board was assisted by an administrator, a position held from 1857 to 1894 by Sir George Scharf Jr., who handled correspondence and researched portraits.²⁹ Together, the Trustees made the decisions concerning the Gallery's administration, and the decisions about which portraits would be collected; and their decisions are, with very few exceptions, represented in the records as unanimous and unopposed.³⁰ Except where there is suggestive evidence for it, this thesis does not attempt to associate particular decisions with particular individuals; rather it posits that it was possible to represent the Trustees' decisions as unanimous because they were based on certain kinds of effective, if not actual, shared knowledge and opinions.

The decisions which shaped the collections, presentations and functions of the Portrait Gallery are thus situated in the contexts of the broader cultures which the Portrait Gallery's Trustees represented. The first chapter describes the relationship between the National Portrait Gallery and its broadest context and culture: the 'nation', particularly the political nation with which many of the Trustees were closely associated. Chapter one, 'The National Portrait Gallery and its constituencies', explores the relationships that were constructed between the Portrait Gallery and its visitors as a way of trying to specify its work in constructing the 'national'. The Portrait Gallery was located in four different neighbourhoods during the period, each of which attracted and accommodated a different audience; the way that administrators of the Gallery responded to those audiences and their needs is taken as evidence about the changing functions of the Portrait Gallery in national life. While the details of the chapter concern the buildings and the ways they were used by visitors and the administration, the main theme is the

²⁹George Scharf Jr. was the chief administrator for most of the period under study, but with respect to the formation of the collection should be regarded as an agent of the Trustees rather than an agent in his own right. The loyalty of his service is reflected in his career history: he was appointed Secretary and Keeper of the NPG in 1857; was given the additional title of Director by the Treasury early in 1882, perhaps as consolation for his disappointment in the matter of a raise which he requested, and of which he was granted only a fraction, late in 1880; and when he retired in 1895, elderly and in ill health, was appointed a Trustee and awarded the K.C.B. He was succeeded in his post by Lionel Cust, F.S.A, in 1895. His career is discussed in more detail in Chapter two, fn. 6.

³⁰The extent and limits of the records of the Trustees' deliberations are discussed in more detail in the introduction to Chapter two.

relationship between the Portrait Gallery's institutional ambitions and the masculinity of the forms of national life with which it was most closely associated - Parliament and citizenship. The implications of this for female visitors to the Gallery are considered in the final chapter, but this observation is used first as a jumping off point to explore the way that this masculine orientation affected the administration of the Gallery, and specifically the formation of the collection.

The National Portrait Gallery was designed to represent and interpret a national history for certain elements of the 'public'. The Trustees' understanding of how portraiture conveyed historical information to its 'public' affected their selection of sitters and of portraits. Reconstructing the ambitions of the Portrait Gallery's administrators in forming and presenting the collection requires attention to the conditions under which the Trustees understood and interpreted portraiture for their contemporaries. Although the individual variations of opinion amongst the Trustees with respect to specific portraits are usually obscure, it is possible to identify some general principles which seem to have underpinned the opinions of 'the Trustees' as they are recorded in the Portrait Gallery's documentation. The second chapter introduces scholarly and other relevant activities, including history, antiquarianism, and art appreciation, which shaped the way that the Trustees interpreted and evaluated potential acquisitions for the collection.

The general criteria for selecting portraits for the Gallery were founded on the activities or practices described in 'Portraiture and patriarchy', and one object of the chapter is to identify the way that gender was implicated in each area. In addition to describing criteria for the selection of portraits, this chapter suggests ways in which gender was implicated in these practices, and how those forms subsequently emerged in the collection. Depending on who constituted the Board at any given moment, a different weight was given to each kind of criteria at different times; but the chapter concludes with the observation that whichever set of practices were engaged, because the Trustees were always men and usually appointed from a common culture, there was always *some* masculinity at stake, a masculinity to define and protect partly through the construction of a suitable feminine counterpart.

The effect of contemporary interpretation on the collection becomes most visible in the Portrait Gallery's assessments of the aesthetic, rather than historical, value of portraits. The period covered by this thesis was one in which the forms and methods of interpreting artworks were urgently challenged, mainly by aestheticism and what can be described as related forms of modernising artistic practice and art criticism.³¹ The history of the Portrait Gallery was linked with these changes not only by virtue of historical and material proximity, but through specific individuals who were practising artists as well as administrators of the Gallery. Through the latter half of the nineteenth century, when amateur artist Viscount Hardinge chaired a Board which included John Everett Millais, Sir Coutts-Lindsay and other practicing artists, the aesthetic paradigms with which they were concerned increasingly influenced the Gallery's collecting and exhibition practices.³² This study argues that the chronological development of the collection was structured in large part by the growing power of the 'artistic' constituency within the Board.

The narrative description in each of the chapters is hence allied most closely with an art historical narrative about 'modernity'.³³

³¹The supporting material for this area of the thesis is relatively inarticulate when it comes to the milieu of the Portrait Gallery, since the history of the 'modernisation' of nineteenth-century painting is largely associated with France. Elizabeth Prettejohn's discussion of the changes to the values and vocabulary of art criticism in 'Aesthetic Value and the Professionalization of Victorian Art Criticism 1837-78', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Spring 1997 2(1): 71-94 is a helpful discussion of the kinds of changes to art appreciation which register in the Portrait Gallery's collection, although it does not extend to a discussion of the relationship of art criticism to art practice; Robert Jensen's *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) includes London in its study of the changing patterns of the art business. I have found that studies of the Grosvenor Gallery are helpful in this area, particularly Christopher Newall's *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1995) and Susan P. Casteras and Colleen Denney, eds. *The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England*, (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

³²The interests of these figures and the ways that they influenced the collection are discussed at more length in Chapter two, section V.

³³Bearing in mind the reservations noted in footnote 31 above, the discussions of nineteenth century English art practice which have been most relevant to this thesis are Diane Sachko Macleod *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996); Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, morality and art*, (Manchester and New York: M.U.P., 1996) and Nunn, *Problem Pictures*. Volumes which deal primarily with what might be described as institutional or social histories of the period are also helpful, such as the studies of the Grosvenor Gallery cited in FN 31 above

Historiographically the advent of modernist art practice is associated with the onset of modernity, a variably constituted set of social, environmental, technological and political changes which took place in Europe roughly between the 1850s and the early 1900s. Feminist histories of the relations between these social practices have revealed that the relationships between modernism, gender and women were fraught.³⁴ Although the definitions of modernism and modernity used here are considerably circumscribed by the limited and relatively conservatising rather than modernising institution which they describe, it is still possible to identify important links between gender, the politics of contemporary artistic practice, and the methods of evaluation used in forming the collection of the National Portrait Gallery.

The first two chapters suggest various ways that a contemporary sense of gender shaped the ambitions of the Portrait Gallery as an institution, and informed the process whereby portraits were accepted, and rejected, by the Board of Trustees over the nominated period; the central three chapters of this thesis are concerned with describing the portraits of women collected by the National Portrait Gallery during the period under study (these are listed in full in Appendix 2). These chapters shift in structure to organise their subjects thematically around the three principal categories of female biography represented in the collection: royal women; beauties; and authors.³⁵ The categories represent a female version of the Gallery's rule which stipulated that to be eligible for acquisition, a portrait should illustrate 'the civil, ecclesiastical, or literary history of the

and Paula Gillett's *Worlds of Art: Painters in Victorian Society*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers U.P., 1990).

³⁴See Lisa Tickner, 'Men's Work?: Masculinity and Modernism', in Norman Bryson et al. eds., *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*, (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994): 42-82; Andreas Huyssen, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other', *After the Great Divide*, (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1986): 44-64; Griselda Pollock, 'Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity', *Vision and Difference: Femininity, feminism and histories of art*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1988): 50-90. Cinzia Sartini Blum's *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996) is a sophisticated psychoanalytically-founded study of the central role of gender in the formation of Italian modernism.

³⁵A small number of the portraits collected are treated separately from the three main chapters: portraits of women artists are treated as part of the final chapter; 'companion' portraits are discussed in the conclusion of Chapter two; and the acquisition of a portrait of Grace Darling is considered in the conclusion of Chapter 1.

country', a series of terms which does not helpfully describe the female roles recognised by the Portrait Gallery.³⁶ While the titles of the chapters accurately describe the occupations of the vast majority of the sitters which they discuss, they are not intended to be exclusively literal; a few exceptions (for instance Bess of Shrewsbury as a 'beauty' and Elizabeth Fry as an 'author') are included in their respective chapters because their biographies are consistent with those of other women in that category.

The Trustees appear to have selected portraits which they believed evoked or represented the aspects of the life of the sitter which they found deserving of commemoration: consequently, not only the biographies, but also the portraits, discussed in each chapter tend to resemble one another or share certain qualities. The ways that particular individuals and groups are represented, and what those representations connoted, are read as far as possible in ways that are consistent with nineteenth-century understanding. Sitters are accounted for with reference to their biographies as known at the time that their portrait was acquired; no attempt has been made to improve on the accuracy of biographies that were given in the Gallery's catalogues or in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Nor has any attempt been made to improve on the accuracy of the identifications, accounts of provenance, or attributions of particular portraits. Some readers will no doubt find this frustrating, but to do otherwise would be to introduce knowledge erroneously, and defeat the thesis' object to account for the collecting practices and processes of the Portrait Gallery as they were enacted during the nineteenth century.

Each chapter discusses specific examples of portraits collected by the Gallery as a way of elaborating the features common to each group of portraits, and exposes some of the abstract principles which were being asserted through the representation of particular individuals. The observation that emerges from this analysis is that women's portraits were assessed for their representation of femininity as it was understood to have existed in different historical periods; and in relation to contemporary ideals of feminine behaviour. What was being constructed in the collection was a

³⁶Second Annual Report of the Trustees, April 1859, NPG. The distaff version of this rule has been inferred from a survey of the collection.

history of English women and femininity which was subject to a process of historical 'progress'. This narrative of the history of femininity was developed exclusively by men, whose masculine culture tended to construct women as the foils to their own ambitions and achievements. It was largely in supporting roles to masculine achievement (or lack thereof) that women were cast in the history of the English nation constructed in the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery.

That trajectory of that historiographical narrative was not, however, static. The narrative of English history constructed in the National Portrait Gallery always posed the (near) present as the necessary or at least logical outcome of the past, a historiographical trait described by Herbert Butterfield as 'whig history'.³⁷ The outcome of the Gallery's historiographical narrative had always to emerge in the present; but that present was also subject to change over time. Consequently this thesis registers two entwined levels of historical narrative: the Portrait Gallery's historiographical account of English history from (roughly) the fourteenth century through to the nineteenth century; and the way that the Portrait Gallery's account of that history shifted between 1856 and 1899, the period here under study. While portraits from all the categories were collected during the entire period, proportionally more portraits of royal women and 'beauties' were collected early in the period, and authors late in the period: thus the biographical groupings of the central three chapters, and their sequence within the thesis, register the changing patterns of the representation of women and femininity in the collection over the period under study.

The first of the chapters on the collection of women's portraits, 'Queens and continuity', deals with portraits of queens and other women belonging to the royal families. Portraits of monarchs formed the backbone of the nineteenth-century collection of the National Portrait Gallery by providing the signifiers both of historical periodisation and historical continuity which was central to the way that historians like Board Chairman Earl Stanhope conceived of the English past. The most obvious expression of this dual role was in the ordering of the collection according to reign, which offered both a

³⁷Sir Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1931).

sense of historical continuity (one reign giving way immediately to another) and of the specificity of historical period, since each monarch was represented in her or his unique portrait and alongside the principal figures of the court. This tension between the continuous and the historical expressed itself also in the forms of femininity represented in portraits of queens and royal women. A certain form of femininity emerges as a trans-historical ideal, one which was only sometimes met by women of the royal family, but whose apparition throughout history demonstrates the Englishness of femininity. The celebration in queens of particular feminine virtues sets up an ideal which, the collection suggested, can be striven for and realised through historical progress.

This narrative of feminine development was made explicit in the part of the collection treated in Chapter four, 'Beauty and beauties'. Portraits of court 'beauties', women who acceded to positions of social influence and sometimes substantial political power through their possession of physical and other charms, were among the first portraits of women collected by the Portrait Gallery. In the context of mid-nineteenth century conventions of female display and sexual propriety, these figures were representative of a distinctively historical form of female life. The historicity of ambitious and provocative beauty was emphasised by confining its representation almost exclusively to the Restoration Court, although many women of the Regency lived similar lives and were represented in portraits distinguished by an idealising aesthetic similar to that seen in Restoration portraits by Lely, Kneller and their studios. Trustees like Leighton who would have been especially sensitive to the aesthetic accomplishment of these paintings probably regarded these pictures in a different light than did the moralising historian Carlyle; but the narrative signification of the 'beauties' was to represent the unseemly femininity of the past which served as a foil to queenly virtue.

Beauties also functioned to define the historic opposite to a present dominated by a more prudent kind of 'public' woman, the authors and women of ideas whose portraits are the subject of Chapter five, 'Authors and the (an)aesthetics of intellect'. The panoply of female authors were the culmination of the nineteenth-century Portrait Gallery's collection of women's portraits, both historically and historiographically. Historiographically, learned women were

represented in all periods, but were represented as a minority of the women recognised until the period of the late eighteenth century; thereafter, women authors predominated. The vast majority of these were acquired late in the nineteenth century, thus producing for the *fin-de-siècle* a representation of the recent past populated by the good and gentle lady author.

If this trend in the Portrait Gallery's collection echoed a contemporary surge, or apparent surge, in the numbers of acknowledged women writers, it can also be related to values which belonged more specifically to the National Portrait Gallery and its Trustees. The minimalist character of the portraits of women authors - which were the most modest of paintings or the plainest of drawings - stood in great contrast to the grand portraits of queens and 'beauties', valorising a contemporary femininity which was hallmarked by lack of aesthetic ambition or pretension. Aesthetic ambition and pretension were, however, qualities that characterised the Portrait Gallery's Board during the last twenty years of the period studied. The construction of contemporary femininity through modest portraits of generally modest lady authors sat remarkably conveniently with the interests of an all-male Board dominated by artists and aesthetes, some of whom had built careers on grand gestures of aesthetic mastery.

The 'national' (as conceived by the Board of Trustees) and the historical thus interacted to produce a collection of women's portraits which was very specific in the kinds of sitters it represented and how it represented them. Those ideals were constructed by the male Trustees partly in relation to their desire for a complementary feminine counterpart; the nineteenth-century collection of women's portraits was at least as much about invoking women as 'sign' of femininity as it was about recognising historical women acting in historical context. These three chapters thus account for 'women' in the National Portrait Gallery in two senses, as 'femininity' and as the sitters for portraits. The final chapter of the thesis explores women 'in' the Portrait Gallery not as 'signs', but in roles where they were agents of their own presence: as visitors and as artists.

Chapter six, 'Seeing and believing: female spectators and feminine spectatorship in the Portrait Gallery' begins by exploring women in

their most numerically significant presence in the Portrait Gallery, as visitors. It is concerned to evaluate the potential affect of the Portrait Gallery's narrative on the female visitor by investigating the processes by which the Portrait Gallery's representation of 'women' might have been (re)produced in the spectator. Positing a female spectator is a contentious business: there is little evidence about exactly how women viewed the Gallery, and speculative descriptions of the female spectator are riven by conflicts amongst feminist theorists about the nature of feminine identity and how it influences women's perception. After describing a normative viewer of the Portrait Gallery, subsequent sections explore two possible forms of 'feminine' spectatorship, which are developed from contemporary evidence according to different theoretical models. The most interesting observation which can be made about these experiments is that in neither case is the 'feminine' spectator granted access to the collection in a way which would allow her to assimilate the ideals coded within it.

Although women and their femininity play an important role in the collection, helping in various ways to define 'the national' and to order its narrative, female or feminine spectatorship proved to be an obstructive, or destructive, quality in the interpretation of the National Portrait Gallery. The final section of the last chapter describes and considers how the various, and contradictory, themes in the Portrait Gallery's collection of female portraits were united in the portraits of women artists. Three portraits of women artists were collected by the Portrait Gallery during the nominated period, three portraits which cannot be situated comfortably within the history of English women which was constructed in the collection. In an institution which was founded on the spectatorial expertise of men, portraits (particularly self-portraits) of women artists, like female spectators, appear to pose a problematic transgression of the gendered boundaries of visual expertise and accomplishment which shaped the collection and the administration of the National Portrait Gallery. The contrast between the ways that 'women' in different forms could collaborate with, or befuddle, the Portrait Gallery's narratives of Englishness is taken up as the concluding element of the thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY AND ITS CONSTITUENCIES

In the 1856 session of Parliament, Earl Stanhope argued in favour of founding a National Portrait Gallery on several grounds: it would give the nation an opportunity to acquaint themselves with a noble past; it would provide a reference collection for artists seeking to represent historical characters, and offer them an opportunity to develop their knowledge of a peculiarly 'English' branch of art; and function as a repository for 'national treasures' which might otherwise be sold into foreign lands. Marcia Pointon has characterised the founding of the Portrait Gallery as an attempt to 'save from the housekeeper's room' artworks which were highly regarded within a context directly descended of the connoisseurial and collecting practices of the eighteenth century.¹ While this is true (in ways which are explored mainly in Chapter two of this thesis), reading the founding of the National Portrait Gallery simply as the legacy of personal eighteenth century collections neglects one of its most important characteristics: that it was founded as a public, specifically a *national*, institution.

Museums and galleries were a source of national prestige within Europe, but if their efforts to consolidate a sense of national importance worked through international comparisons, they were intended to function primarily in a domestic context.² As institutions they played an important role in the informal nineteenth century programme to create a new sense of national identity and national

¹Marcia Pointon, 'Epilogue: "Saved from the Housekeeper's Room": The Foundation of the National Portrait Gallery, London', *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth Century England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1993): 227-244. The Portrait Gallery was one expression of an impulse to visualise history through portraiture and biography that evinced itself on many levels, not all of them through the 'high' culture of portrait collection: Madame Tussaud's waxworks, which catered to comparable desires, had been established in Baker Street in 1830. See Uta Kornmeier, 'Faces and Figures. A Museological Comparison between Madame Tussaud's and the National Portrait Gallery', MA, Courtauld Institute of Art, 1995.

²As opposed, for instance, to any attention given the Gallery's role in attracting or educating foreign visitors. The earliest recorded mention of tourists as visitors made within the Portrait Gallery's administration is in Scharf's notes, dated 7 April 1889, *Science and Art Department and Bethnal Green 1865-99*, Volume 3, NPG, London. Paul Barlow cites a mention which was made by an objector to the Gallery in the Commons debates in 'The Imagined Hero As Incarnate Sign: Thomas Carlyle and the Mythology of the National Portrait in Victorian Britain', *Art History* 1994, 17(4): 522.

life.³ Made urgent by the dramatic political changes taking place in Britain and throughout Europe after the French and American Revolutions, and following the apparent creation of a new political class in Britain with the Reform Act of 1832, the cultivation of appropriately elevated national manners and mores was seen as an important responsibility of the state.⁴ Galleries and museums became part of a programme to elevate the masses by way of introducing them to artifacts which would educate their sensibilities, and by exposing them to a higher standard of public deportment.⁵ As Robert Peel, one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the National Gallery, expressed it, the arts might cement 'the bonds of union between the richer and poorer orders of state'.⁶

But if identifying the importance of the 'national' in the conception of the National Portrait Gallery reveals its chief ambition, the term 'nation' in turn requires definition. Apparently inclusive, the term 'nation' implies exclusions as well as inclusions, the contours of which are neither given, nor easily pinned down through conventional documentary evidence. The single clear statement about the extent of the 'national' audience for the National Portrait Gallery was not

³The best account of the nationalistic ideals coded in the founding of early art museums is in Carol Duncan, 'From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum: The Louvre Museum and National Gallery, London', *Civilising Rituals* (London: Routledge, 1995): 21-47; also in an article co-authored with A. Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History*, December 1980, 3: 447-469. On the early attempt of private individuals to found a public collection, and its explicit relationship with encouraging a national school, see Peter Fullerton, 'Patronage and Pedagogy: The British Institution in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Art History*, March 1982, 5(1): 59-72, and Peter Funnell, 'The London Art World and Its Institutions', Celina Fox, ed., *London World City* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992): 155-166.

⁴The best specific account of British nation-building is Linda Colley's *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (Yale University Press 1992, reprinted London: Pimlico, 1994); for a thoughtful consideration of the role of museums in this process see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (revised edition, London and New York: Verso, 1991): 163-186; Philip Corrigan's, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1985) deals specifically with art galleries, museums and the 'national', as does Annie E. Coombes, 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities', *Oxford Art Journal*, 1988, 11(2): 57-68.

⁵See Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, (London: Routledge, 1995), particularly pp. 48-58 and 99-101, and Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*.

⁶Quoted in Colin Trodd, 'Culture, Class, City: The National Gallery, London and the Spaces of Education, 1822-57', in Marcia Pointon ed., *Art Apart* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994): 33. Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum* is particularly keen to expose the disciplinary nature of the collection, architecture and ritual of the nineteenth century museum.

made by the Gallery's administrators, but is recorded as part of a House of Commons funding debate (supply vote) in 1856, in which three Members of Parliament objected that they were being asked to fund an amenity for the enjoyment of Londoners only, and that the 'nation' of tax payers who lived in the country should not have to foot the bill for a Gallery which would be visited only by the 'nation' of leisured metropolitans.⁷ This debate recognised that the 'nation' was divided, but exactly who was included in, and who was less included, or excluded entirely from, the 'nation' addressed by the National Portrait Gallery was only ever implied in its institutional records.⁸

The cultural work which it was intended would be performed by the National Portrait Gallery within the 'nation' of the later-nineteenth century can thus only be inferred from evidence which suggests, but does not specify, the audience it intended to address. This proves particularly crucial in assessing women's relationship to the Gallery. Studies of women's role in the 'nation' usually find that women were in an ambivalent position with respect to definitions of citizenship and nationality. Women's inclusion within the borders of the 'nation' depends considerably on exactly which aspects of it are under examination: for instance, while women (barring Queen Victoria) were excluded from the mechanisms of the state administration in nineteenth-century England, they were often expressly implicated in the 'national' work of colonial settlement or philanthropic activity.⁹ Women were also inconsistently present within the National Portrait Gallery: while the Gallery was founded and funded by an entirely male body (Parliament) and administered by an all-male Board of Trustees, its collection included numerous portraits of women. A superficial description of women in the National Portrait Gallery produces intriguing contradictions; understanding gender in the Portrait Gallery thus requires a more elaborate description of the 'nation' which it was intended to address.

The decisions about which 'nation' the Portrait Gallery would address, and how, rested in the hands of the Gallery's Trustees and

⁷These were Mr. Spooner, Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Williams, whose objections did not defeat the vote to fund the Portrait Gallery. *Hansard*, 3d series, V. 142, cols. 113-24.

⁸The limits of the documentation of the Portrait Gallery's early history are discussed briefly in the introduction and more extensively in the introduction to Chapter two.

⁹See the introduction to this thesis for a discussion of women and nationality.

the offices of national government (Parliament, the Treasury, the Office of the Works) which put resources for exhibition at the Gallery's disposal. Their decisions were taken in the broad context of developing a programme of social, economic and artistic education of the population through national exhibiting institutions, including the National Gallery and South Kensington Museum which were founded during the same period. The contests and tensions arising from this rather ambitious work manifested themselves in an unusual feature of the National Portrait Gallery's early history, which moved through a wide range of architectural and geographical settings during its first forty years: it had humble origins in a house in Westminster (1858); then became one element in the grand enterprise which was South Kensington (1869); was subsequently spun off to the South Kensington satellite museum at Bethnal Green (1885); and finally moved to its permanent quarters on St. Martin's Lane in 1896 (figures 1 and 2). The changes to its location, to its exhibiting practices in each exhibition space, and the debate that accompanied each of the Portrait Gallery's moves are assessed in this chapter to reveal some of the changing assumptions about the Gallery's intended audience, and about its intended functions within national life.

One of the themes that emerges in this material is that national exhibiting institutions in general, and the Portrait Gallery in particular, were primarily concerned with aspects of nationality that were gendered male, specifically political citizenship and to some extent economic citizenship. This chapter plots the Portrait Gallery's moves and exhibitionary regimes with respect to important changes in suffrage and other rankings of citizenship. While the Gallery's administrators paid some attention to even the most marginal members of the potential audience for the Gallery, ultimately (in the narrative constructed by the periodisation of this thesis) it recognized that national portraiture was an élite male interest, and catered to the constituency of the 'busy man'.¹⁰ Women certainly visited the Portrait Gallery, but questions about their experiences are left for the final chapter. This chapter concentrates on investigating the

¹⁰This is the phrase used to describe the audience for the Portrait Gallery in 'The New National Portrait Gallery', *Illustrated London News*, 11 April, 1896, 108: 452.

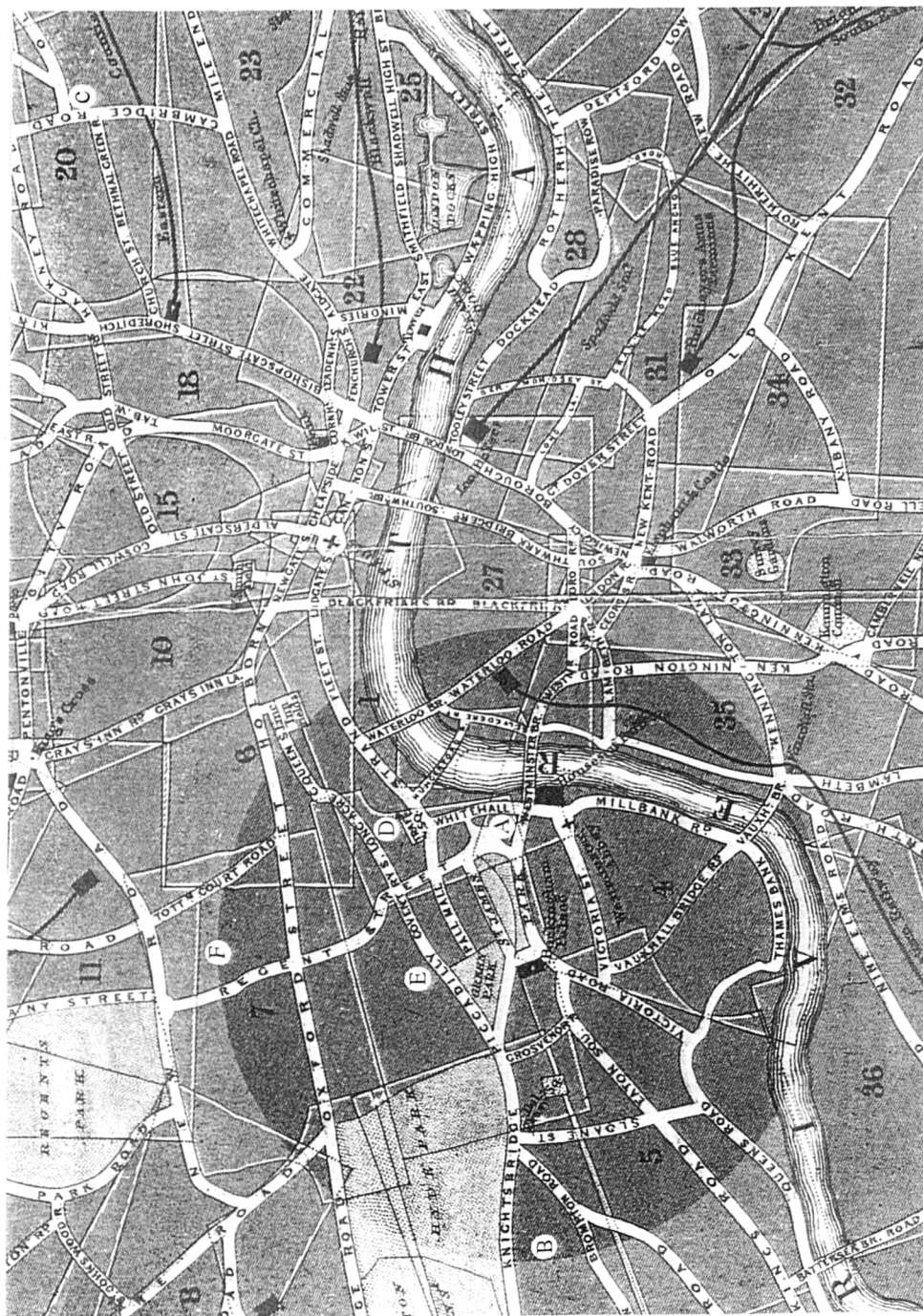


Figure 1: Map of London from *Collin's Illustrated Atlas of London*, (1854) reprinted with an introduction by H.J. Dyos, (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1973). For key see figure 2.

Figure 2: Location of premises occupied by the National Portrait Gallery 1858-1899 (Key to map illustrated in figure 1)

Scale of map is approximately 3 cm: 1 mile

A: Great George Street, Westminster; Westminster Abbey and Houses of Parliament located nearby

B: Estate of the Commissioners of the Great Exhibition of 1851, South Kensington

C: Bethnal Green Museum

D: St. Martin's Place; adjacent to National Gallery and Trafalgar Square

E: Burlington House, location of Royal Academy and Learned Societies; near to New Bond Street galleries and auction houses

The darkened circle inside the map circumscribes a one-and-a-half mile radius around St. James Street, the area for building stipulated in the donation of funds for the 1896 National Portrait Gallery

masculinities which underpinned the Portrait Gallery's educative and political functions, in an effort to delineate the role of women and femininity within the collection; how those functions influenced the collecting of images of women are sketched in a concluding discussion of the Portrait Gallery's acquisition of a portrait of Grace Darling.

I. The Portrait Gallery in Westminster, 1859 - 1868

During the first ten years it was open, the National Portrait Gallery was exhibited in a context which strongly suggested its connection to Parliament and what was still the intimate world of national politics. The original site of the National Portrait Gallery was not initially intended for a public gallery, but like the National Gallery was first and temporarily exhibited in a domestic setting. Two floors of a house at 29 Great George Street were initially let by the Office of the Works for the Portrait Gallery's offices and storage; these functions were soon afterwards extended to include housing the Secretary and Keeper, George Scharf, and eventually to exhibiting the collection. The collection comprised only forty or so paintings when an enthusiastic letter written by Scharf and published in the *Athenaeum* provoked demands from 'the public' that the Portrait Gallery open, which it did on 15 January 1859.¹¹ The opening of the Portrait Gallery in Great George Street was somewhat impromptu, but there were deep connections between the Portrait Gallery's first Westminster location, its 'public' and its intended function in national life.

The genealogy of the Portrait Gallery could be said to begin with the destruction by fire in 1834, and subsequent rebuilding, of the seat of national politics: the Palace of Westminster. The connection between the collection of portraits and the rebuilding of Westminster operated at a number of different levels, one of which was their shared status as antiquities. Before the Old Palace burnt in 1834, it had been the subject of forty years' deliberation on the relative merits of its unsuitability as a building, and on the considerable value of its antiquity. The architecture and ornamentation of certain ancient parts of the old Palace were the subjects of monograph studies by John Carter and J.T. Smith which were published in the early nineteenth century, and which contributed to its status as a

¹¹ Stanhope to Scharf, 1858, Trustees' letters to Scharf, NPG, London.
Facing Femininities: Chapter one

national monument.¹² While some of these antique structures were left standing after the fire of 1834, they were substantially renovated in the process of rebuilding, which replaced them with Barry's neo-gothic design. The historicising architecture of the New Palace was intended as a 'sculptured memorial of our national history'.¹³ A gallery of national portraits which *were* actual antiquities responded to the same impulse to valorise the English parliament as ancient, an association which was especially effective whilst the collection was shown in Great George Street, virtually opposite both Westminster Abbey and the new Palace.

The connection between the celebration of national history and painting had been established and developed in the decoration of the New Palaces.¹⁴ Many of the questions about what images and episodes were of national significance, and suitable subjects for national art, had been considered by the Fine Arts Commission of 1841-63, which directed the decoration of the new houses of Parliament. The fifth Earl Stanhope, nominal founder of the National Portrait Gallery and the first Chair of its Board of the Trustees, was an enthusiastic member of the Fine Arts Commission, and it is clear that many of the concerns that were raised in the process of decorating the Palace were addressed in the founding of the Portrait Gallery. One of the important conclusions he seems to have drawn from the the relatively disappointing results of the Westminster decorations was that the prosaic, vigorous genre of portraiture had more documentary value than the grand history painting. The ancient portraits functioned both as models for the representation of, and as actual physical remnants of, the past which was constantly referred to in the practice and description of English government.

Portraiture as an alternative to history painting was made attractive by its correspondence with revised ideas about historical representation and through constructions of its appeal to an 'English

¹²See M.H. Port, 'The Old Houses of Parliament', in Port, ed. *The Houses of Parliament*, (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976): 5-19.

¹³Port, *The Houses of Parliament*: 232.

¹⁴The relation between the Fine Arts Commission and the Portrait Gallery has been detailed by Paul Barlow in 'The Imagined Hero As Incarnate Sign'; on the Palace see Port, *The Houses of Parliament*, T.S.R. Boarse; 'The Decoration of the New Palace of Westminster, 1841-1863', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 1954, 17(3/4): 319-358; and David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian Art World*, (New Jersey: Princeton, 1978): 66-69.

character'. The urge to find a different, more prosaic form of visual historical representation than that offered by conventional academic history painting was in fact emerging simultaneously in Britain, France and the United States.¹⁵ Although not exclusively English, this impulse did evidently have an appeal which could be constructed as a national one.¹⁶ The English were perceived by contemporaries to have a peculiar affinity for portraits because of their preference for empirical exactness over what was constructed as a continental propensity for idealisation or ornamentation.¹⁷ George Scharf, as Secretary of the National Portrait Gallery, wrote in 1870 that 'an Englishman's preference for a matter-of-fact portrait over a classical imaginary composition appears to be very decided.'¹⁸ Earl Stanhope claimed that a National Portrait Gallery would not just compare to, but be an improvement on, the historical galleries of Versailles, which to his mind were overwhelmed with poor and inaccurate history paintings.¹⁹ Formed in relation to an assertion of Englishness, and against Frenchness, historical portraiture was seen to have a national significance.

¹⁵Francis Haskell, 'Museums, Illustrations and the Search for Authenticity', in *History and Its Images*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993): 279-303.

¹⁶On this in relation to the Portrait Gallery and later developments, see Gertrude Prescott Nuding, 'Britishness and Portraiture', in Roy Porter, ed., *Myths of the English*, (London: Polity Press, 1992): 237-269.

¹⁷Sir Walter Scott expressed a commonly held attachment to empiricism when he wrote 'it is impossible to me to conceive a work more interesting to the present age than that which exhibits before our eyes our fathers as they lived, to compare their persons and countenances with their sentiments and actions.' Quoted in Roy Strong, *And when did you last see your father?*, (n.p.: Thames and Hudson, 1978): 62; Ann Bermingham's, 'System, Order, and Abstraction: The Politics of English Landscape Drawing Around 1795', in W.J.T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power*, (London and Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994): 77-101 deals interestingly with these questions; see also Barlow's concluding thoughts in 'The Imagined Hero as Incarnate Sign': 523/24, 542. The contested nature of 'national' aesthetics during the 1830s and 1840s is surveyed by William Vaughan in 'Constable's Englishness', *Oxford Art Journal*, 1996, 19(2): 17-27.

¹⁸George Scharf, his proof copy of 'National Portrait Gallery' entry for *Companion to the Almanac or Yearbook of General Information for 1871*, NPG, London. He noted in his *Report to the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery by their Secretary upon his Expedition to Paris from August 17 to September 4 1867*, (printed by HMSO, 1868, for the use of the Trustees): 4, that the English love of historical portraits sometimes inspired them to rename foreign subjects as Englishmen, a tendency which he did not observe on the continent. Frequent misattributions were another reason to make a public collection of authentic portraits.

¹⁹*Hansard*, 3d series, V. 140, col. 1771. This enticement was repeated to the House of Commons by Palmerston.

The 'national' of the Portrait Gallery was thus explicitly linked to that of Parliament and Westminster, a 'national' which was still the prerogative of a very select group, notably a select male group.²⁰ The effectiveness of the 1832 Reform Act in reconstituting the class base of Parliament and government is a subject historians love to debate, arguing variously that it did or did not have an important influence on subsequent Parliaments.²¹ It is, though, generally agreed that the social composition of the reformed Parliament differed little from that of the unreformed Parliament: the House of Lords was of course unaltered, and the Commons continued to be populated mainly by the uncommon, some half of the seats being occupied by the gentry, peers and their relations.²² The national life invested in and represented by Westminster remained that of a relatively small but especially privileged group dominated by the gentry and aristocracy, and the early Portrait Gallery catered to that constituency, and echoed the forms of their privileged lives.

The kind of building occupied in Westminster by the National Portrait Gallery, as well as its site, associated it with the sophisticated prestige galleries of the nineteenth century that were largely the privilege of this select parliamentary class. In the tradition of the National Gallery and the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery was initially set up in what was, and continued to be used as, a private home.²³ The Gallery, which included some small furnishings and the occasional arrangement of fresh flowers, retained its homely atmosphere (figure 3).²⁴ The collection was not displayed in a way

²⁰Robert Colls, 'Englishness and the Political Culture', Robert Colls and Philip Dodd, eds., *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, (London: Croom Helm, 1986): 29-61.

²¹A recent revisitation of the problems of interpreting the historical consequences of the Act is to be found in John A. Phillips and Charles Wetherell, 'The Great Reform Act of 1832 and the Political Modernization of England', *American Historical Review*, April 1995, 100(2): 411-436.

²²See 'the System of Representation' in F.B. Smith, *The Making of the Second Reform Bill* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1966): 15-27. Smith's characterisation of the reformed parliament is received wisdom; Phillips and Wetherell's revisionist argument, for instance, does not challenge it, and on the voting patterns of the resulting electorate rather than the Parliament it elected.

²³Scharf was assigned quarters, which he apparently shared with his mother, in the house as a means of security for the collection; one James Simpson was also recorded as an occupant of 29 Great George Street during the time of the Portrait Gallery's tenancy. See *The Survey of London: Parish of St. Margaret, Westminster*, Part I, ed. Montagu H. Cox and Philip Norman, (London: London County Council, 1926): 48, and Susan Lasdun's *Victorians at Home*, (London: Wedenfield and Nicholson, 1981).

²⁴Scharf's sketches of the Gallery in 1863, NPG, London.

that marked out its difference as a 'public' gallery from a distinguished 'private' collection which received strangers. One mark of this was that visitors had access to what was called the Board Room, where the Trustees and Secretary held their meetings: no spatial distinction was then made between the 'professional' and the 'public' areas of the Gallery.²⁵ The portraits were hung as there was space for them on the walls, including in the stairwells: the whole enterprise amounted to an undifferentiated exhibition of a collection which was still itself irregular in its selection of sitters.

The sense of intimacy and privilege which was generated by the exhibition at Great George Street was enhanced by the limitations on admittance to the Gallery. Until 1861, admission was by ticket; although free, tickets could be obtained only on application to 'the three principal printsellers in London', being Colnaghi's and Graves' on Pall Mall, and John Smith in New Bond Street.²⁶ Visits were also restricted by limited opening days and limited daylight by which to view the pictures. From 1859 until 1864, the Portrait Gallery was open only on Wednesdays and Saturdays and then just for a few hours; in 1864 the opening hours were extended and in 1865, at the request of the Treasury, Monday was added as a third opening day.²⁷ Since the Portrait Gallery's business hours were virtually identical with general business hours, visits to the Gallery were almost exclusively restricted to those who could make themselves available during business hours: the Portrait Gallery, in other words, catered to a relatively leisured class of customers.

If the early Portrait Gallery catered primarily to a leisured class, thoughts sometimes turned to the 'public' who worked long hours for a living. The Trustees blamed the gallery itself for the exclusion, insisting in their reports however that 'the free admission of the public will be one of their first objects whenever an adequate Gallery can be provided by the Government'.²⁸ Saturday, being a customary

²⁵The importance of this distinction is explored by Carol McKay in an unpublished paper, 'Museums, curators and the mere "snapper up of unconsidered trifles": some nineteenth-century debates', M.S., unpublished paper 1996.

²⁶Second Annual Report of the Trustees, 15 April 1859, NPG, London.

²⁷The Gallery's opening hours are recorded in the Trustees' Annual Reports. NPG, London.

²⁸Second Annual Report of the Trustees, NPG, London.

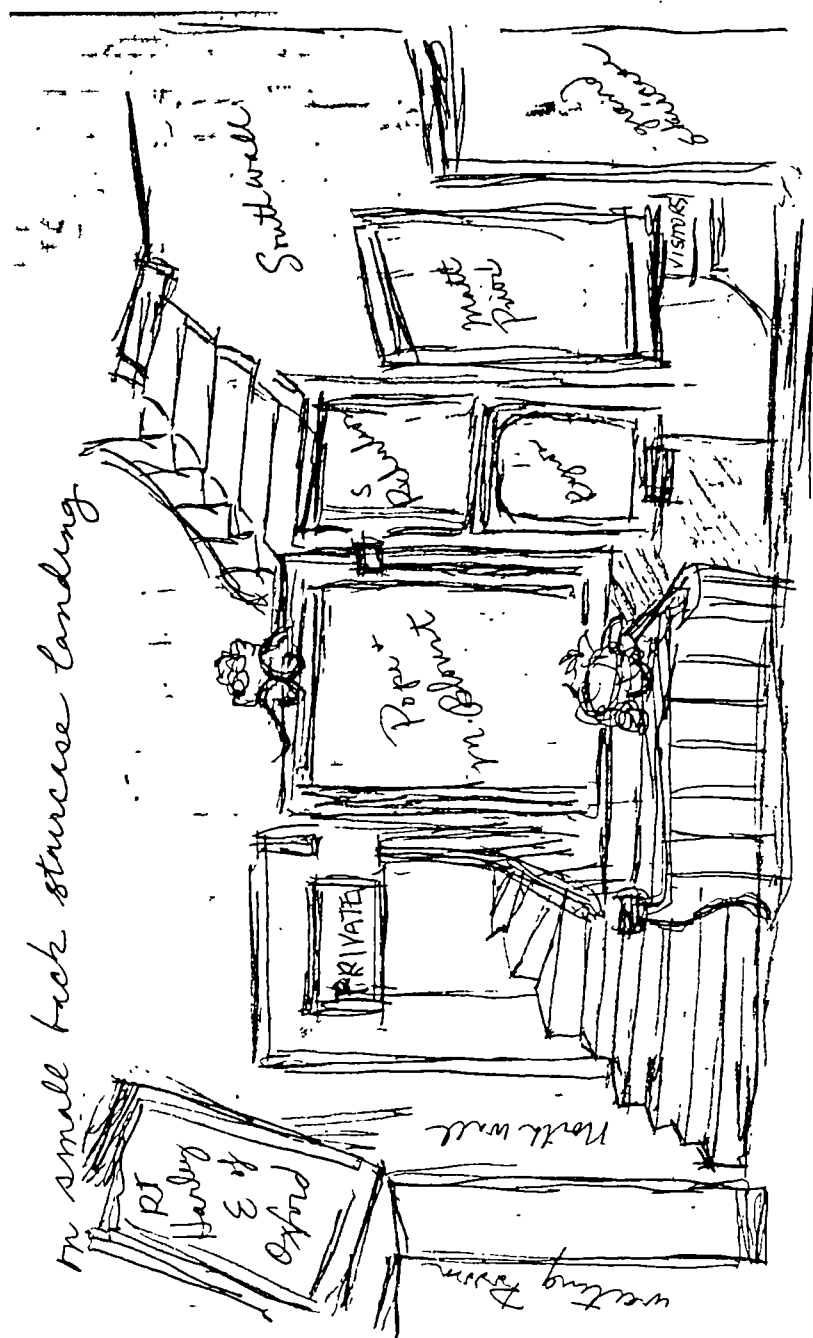


Figure 3: Interior of the National Portrait Gallery at Great George Street; author's copy of drawing by George Scharf, NPG, London.

half-holiday, was a day when the working-classes might well have visited the Gallery.²⁹ And if the general admission policies were not designed for a wide admittance, the National Portrait Gallery made specific efforts to attract the attendance of the working-classes by opening specially over the whole of the major three day holidays of Easter (April), and after the move to South Kensington, during Whitsuntide (early June). These occasions produced the first aids to study of the portraits, which were 'gratis' lists giving the names of the sitters in alphabetical order along with their dates and the name of the painter of the portrait. The Easter holidays were generally extremely well-attended, and the administrators of the Portrait Gallery took great satisfaction in the use of the gallery by the working-classes.

The location in Westminster seems to have provided an appropriate space for the mixed use of the Gallery which its officials had in mind. Its location and setting rooted it firmly in the sophisticated traditions of learned connoisseurship, but its centrality allowed its occasional use as a means of more general education. If the gallery was understood to cater for different levels of public use, those differences were not inscribed in the actual presentation of the collection: it was presented in what were then still the conventions of connoisseurship and élite, private forms of appreciation. Visitors whose status outside the Gallery meant that they were understood to use it in a different manner were accommodated through special openings hours and the provision of gratis lists of the portraits, but they were barely more than accommodated. Without underestimating the liberality of creating a public gallery in the middle of Westminster, the persistence of élite forms of exhibition at Great George Street is worth emphasising because of how those forms were altered as the National Portrait Gallery moved within London, and its relation to its public changed.

²⁹Henry Walker's *London Saturday Half-Holiday Guide*, (London: Saturday Half-Holiday Committee, 1871) covered the museums, galleries and national buildings open to the public, including the National Portrait Gallery, as 'an agency for extending the blessings of the Saturday Half-holiday still further to the overworked classes of the London population'.

II. The Portrait Gallery in South Kensington, 1868-1885

At the time that the Portrait Gallery was founded, the question of how the government was going to organise the accommodation of the whole of the national collections of art and other objects of study was still hotly contested.³⁰ Through the late 1850s and 60s the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery hoped that the resolution of these multifarious questions would result in the assignment of funds for a permanent Gallery. As early as 1862 it had been proposed that the Portrait Gallery move to South Kensington, but the Trustees had resisted. In 1867, the year that the Governor Eyre affair in Jamaica and subsequent major suffrage reform significantly altered the constitution of the parliamentary 'nation', the Portrait Gallery acquiesced to the move to South Kensington. The changes attendant on that move can be understood as an attempt to reshape the Portrait Gallery for a new audience, one which had always existed but whose access to the Gallery took on a new urgency once they had been granted access to Parliament.

The first part of the nineteenth century had seen London redeveloped as a European capital, and the Portrait Gallery was conceived as a distinctively English (as opposed to continental) contribution to its status as a great European city.³¹ In the second half of the century this focus shifted, and Westminster was built up to accommodate the apparatus of a world-wide Empire: the Admiralty, the Courts and the War Office.³² Building priorities in

³⁰M.H. Port, 'Art and Science', in *Imperial London: Civil Government Building in London 1850-1915*, (New Haven & London: Yale U.P. for Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1995): 82-102; and Geoffrey Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 178-200.

³¹Stanhope drew specific parallels between his ambitions for the National Portrait Gallery and the Louvre when he proposed it to the Upper House on 4 March 1856; see *Hansard*, 3d Series, V. 140, col. 1771. Palmerston used the same strategy on the Commons, V. 142, col. 1119/20. On public buildings in the first half of the century, see M.H. Port, 'Imperial City', *Imperial London*: 5-25, and Rodney Mace, *Trafalgar Square: Emblem of Empire* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976): 23-47; an account of the cult of Athenian London during the period when the British Museum and the National Gallery were built can be found in Ian Jenkins, 'Athens Rising Near the Pole': London, Athens and the Idea of Freedom', in Fox, ed., *London World City*: 143-154.

³²Elizabeth Coutts, 'Between History and Art: the Foundation of the National Portrait Gallery', M.A., Birkbeck College, 1994, observes that by the time of Stanhope's death in 1874, the lack of mention of the Portrait Gallery in his obituaries indicates that it had fallen 'between the cracks' of public interest: 1-
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Whitehall were squeezing out the National Portrait Gallery at the same time that it was expanding, and by the mid 1860s, the acquisition of additional space for the Gallery became very pressing. That space would not be found in Westminster: government offices built on Great George Street and nearby Delahay Street (a proposed site for the Portrait Gallery) early in the twentieth century had been contemplated as early as the 1850s, and were almost certainly responsible for the Portrait Gallery's loss of its coveted Westminster site.³³

As early as 1862 it was suggested that the Portrait Gallery move to South Kensington, but the Trustees received it coldly. Although the National Portrait Gallery's move to South Kensington was barely debated in the public arena (negotiations took place behind the closed doors of its Trustees and the national bureaucrats concerned), the National Gallery's proposed move to South Kensington was the subject of much instructive discussion. In Geoffrey Tyack's words, there was a 'manic restlessness which seems to have afflicted all mid-Victorian politicians involved with the National Gallery',³⁴ one which is explicable only if the National Gallery is seen as a stake in a debate with wider implications. The proposal to move the National Gallery was Prince Albert's, and although it was under serious consideration through the early 1850s, it did not receive the support of the art establishment. The defenders of an unreconstructed National Gallery and Royal Academy were no friends of the reforming Prince, and used a language saturated in class division when they objected not only to the removal of the National Gallery to what were then suburbs, but also to the perceived 'lowering' of the fine arts that would result from associating them with the South Kensington Museum and Schools collection of industrial design and

3, which was true as far as the Office of the Works was concerned. The changes in the history of gallery construction in the nineteenth century are surveyed in Waterfield, *Palaces of Art: Art Galleries in Britain, 1790 - 1990*, (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1991); in several of the essays in Marcia Pointon, ed. *Art Apart*; and in Port, 'The Case for Public Buildings', *Imperial London*: 26-57.
³³Port, 'Government Offices', *Imperial London*: 114-137.

³⁴Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London*: 200. The most pungent readings on the subject are the parliamentary papers: see *Reports from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, P.P. 1850 V. 15, (612) & P.P. 1852-53 V. 35, (28); *Report of the National Gallery Site Commission*, P.P. 1857 Session 2, V. 24, (2261); and the *Report from the Commissioners on the Present Position of the Royal Academy in Relation to the Fine Arts*, P.P. 1863 V. 26, (3205).

manufacture.³⁵ The Trustees of the Portrait Gallery used similar language to resist suggestions that it move to South Kensington.³⁶

In 1867, however, the Trustees agreed to the move to South Kensington that they would undertake early in 1870. By the time they had in fact moved the Gallery, two of the explicit objections to South Kensington had been answered: it had been made more accessible by the opening of the South Kensington Underground station in 1868; and the Portrait Gallery had been offered accommodation more salubrious than either the reviled 1862 Exhibition building or the 'Brompton Boilers' that had housed the South Kensington Museum. The Portrait Gallery moved into Western end of the South element of the quadrangle surrounding the Royal Horticultural Society's gardens, an elegant situation originally designed to attract the National Gallery.³⁷ But whereas it was resolved that the National Gallery should remain at Trafalgar Square, the government insisted that the Portrait Gallery should go to South Kensington. This distribution of resources seems clearly linked to the different social functions of the two galleries, and the audiences they were meant to address.

The decision to remove the Portrait Gallery to South Kensington was taken around the same time as the 1867 Reform Act was passed. Those who are not persuaded that the 1832 Reform Act was the decisive moment in the democratisation of the British electorate generally identify the 1867 Reform as the first step towards mass (male) enfranchisement. The electorate nearly doubled, to include almost half of the adult male population including working men.³⁸ The constituency of voters and those with concerns and interests in Westminster and its 'nation' therefore also nearly doubled, and perhaps more importantly, took on a new character: the parliamentary 'nation' was not defined by property, but by a form of

³⁵See M.H. Port, 'Prince Albert and King Cole', *The London Journal*, November 1977, 3(2): 221-230; also the *Survey of London*, The Museums Area of South Kensington and Westminster, (London: Greater London Council, 1975) V. 38: 49-96.

³⁶One of the most active opponents of Prince Albert's plans for the development of the South Kensington estate was Lord Elcho, who until 1867 was also a Trustee of the Portrait Gallery. See Port, *Imperial City*: 87.

³⁷Prince Albert had patronised the Society and offered them grounds on the estate in an attempt to attract the National Gallery to South Kensington. *Survey of London*, V. 38: 124 -132.

³⁸Smith, *The Making of the Second Reform Bill*: 2.
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patriarchal masculinity.³⁹ A whole new element of the (male) population was eligible for, indeed urgently required, instruction in the history, values and mores of formal (i.e. parliamentary) national life, and South Kensington appeared to be the place to do it.

The galleries at the south end of the Horticultural Gardens at the South Kensington estate had proven themselves as a site suitable to instruction by portraiture, and permitted the Portrait Gallery to reconstruct its exhibition in a fashion most conducive to the education - specifically the political education - of visitors. The galleries offered to the National Portrait Gallery were those which had been occupied by the National Portrait Loan Exhibitions, held between 1865 and 1867.⁴⁰ Portraits in the loan exhibitions were vetted neither for the sitter's historical significance nor even their certain identification (both important disciplines in the Portrait Gallery's collection) but were popular enough to have generated an interest in historical portraiture which seems to have had a material impact on attendance at the Portrait Gallery even in Westminster.⁴¹ Not only were the galleries at South Kensington proven to attract this wider audience, but the more spacious and institutional qualities of the South Kensington galleries permitted the Portrait Gallery to cater more effectively to its educational functions (figure 4).

The Portrait Gallery was placed in the context of the other (mainly) museums which occupied the South Kensington Estate, a locale which marked it out as a site for rational recreation. There, the Portrait Gallery had more space at its disposal, an alteration which had an important effect on its use. The portraits could be hung in an orderly fashion; they were each given more space and were hung, importantly, in chronological order. The chronological order of the

³⁹See Catherine Hall, *White, Male, Middle-Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992) and 'Rethinking Imperial Histories: the Reform Act of 1867', *New Left Review*, December 1994, 208: 3-29; also Keith McClelland, 'Rational and Respectable Man,' in Laura Frader and Sonya O. Rose, eds., *Gender and Class in Modern Europe*, (London and Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996): 280-293.

⁴⁰*Survey of London*, V. 38: 65. The text indicates that the 'national portraits' had a continuous tenancy from 1865 to 1885; since the National Portrait Gallery did not take possession until December 1869, the earlier date almost certainly refers to the Loan Exhibitions.

⁴¹16,642 persons visited the NPG in 1865; in 1866 attendance went up by 50% to 24,666; 24,649 visited in 1867; and 25,344 in 1868. The pattern continued in 1869, when 24,757 attended. Figures taken from NPG Trustees Reports made the year following each date given, respectively.

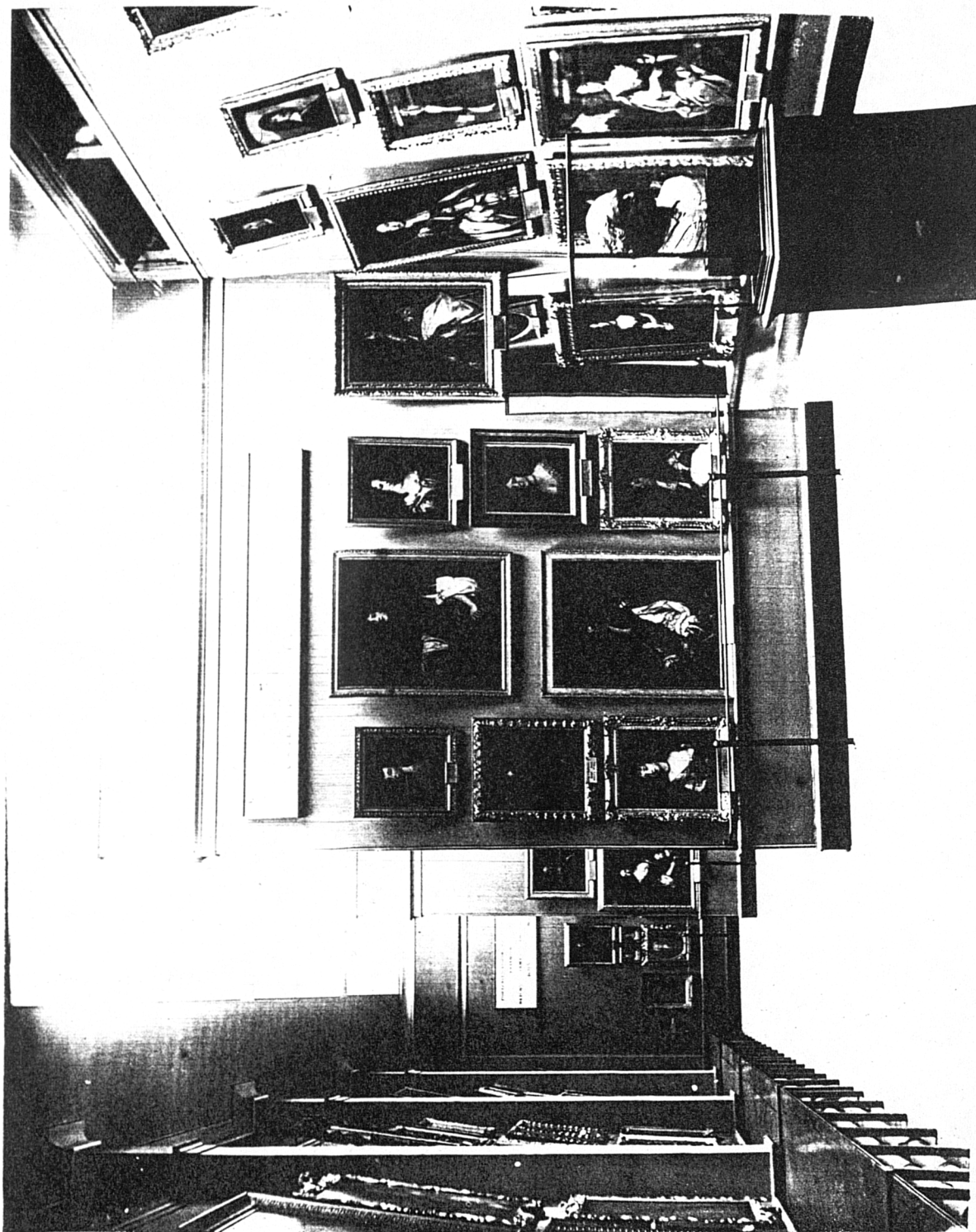


Figure 4: The National Portrait Gallery installed at South Kensington Galleries, showing installation of portraits from the reign of Charles II. Photograph courtesy the NPG, London.

portraits placed both the portraits and the viewer under a disciplinary regime: signs hung over the portraits marked out the different periods, and directed the visitor in historical order through the gallery. The Portrait Gallery was thus constituted as a narrative of English history, a form in which the lessons of English history represented by the portraits were more readily discernible. Those lessons might even have been understood as a direct address to the newly enfranchised visitor: Patrick Joyce observes that (political) narrative offers a fleeting opportunity to fix the identity of those who can imagine their own participation in it.⁴² The narrative constructed seems at any rate to have been an intervention in the political culture of the day.

The persuasiveness of the Portrait Gallery-as-political-narrative relied on certain mid-century beliefs about history and material culture. The capacity of portraiture to be assembled into a specific narrative was assured through the historicist discourse of the mid-nineteenth century, which understood material culture to be integrally related to social culture. The qualities of art objects, like other artefacts, were believed to have been shaped by the social conditions in which they were produced, social conditions which could in turn be revealed by the nature of the artefacts.⁴³ Given the correct context for their study - the context of a collection which represented each period in chronological order - the artefacts could themselves reveal the historical progress of society. Nineteenth century historicism asserted that historical knowledge was produced not by seeing a particular kind of object or evidence, but by seeing it a particular way. This theory of material culture affected the planning and execution of all the museums and exhibitions organized by the community of museum builders in the nineteenth century.

⁴²Patrick Joyce, 'the constitution and the narrative structure of Victorian politics', James Vernon, ed., *Re-reading the constitution: New narratives in the political history of England's long nineteenth century*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996): 179-203.

⁴³For a definition of nineteenth century historicism see Maurice Mandelbaum, *History, Man, and Reason*, (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1971): 31-49. This view was importantly developed within antiquarian studies, with which many of the Portrait Gallery Trustees were involved; this influence is discussed at more length in Chapter two, section IV of this thesis. See also Haskell, *History and Its Images*: 217-235, and on the didactic arrangement of other kinds of objects, David K. van Keuren, 'Museums and Ideology: Augustus Pitt-Rivers, Anthropological Change, and Social Change in Later Victorian Britain', *Victorian Studies*, Autumn 1994 28(1): 171-180.

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Although there was no absolute consensus about the role or function of museological displays, it was accepted within the parliamentary circles which regulated the national museums that a collection of historical portraits could be understood to function as a representation of history.⁴⁴ Specific to portraiture were the related convictions that the past was best understood through the study of historical actors, and that historical actors were best represented through portraiture: Earl Stanhope quoted to the House of Lords Thomas Carlyle's assertion that a portrait was 'a small and lighted candle' which allowed for a full understanding of the sitter's biography.⁴⁵ Carlyle's feelings about portraiture were consistent with historicist interpretation, which was applied to artworks and other constructed objects. The manner in which the portrait was rendered, the nature of the dress and objects shown in the portrait, the craft and condition of the frame (if original), canvas or board upon which the image was painted were all viewed as evidence of the material conditions under which the portrait was produced, and of the culture (if not the personality) of the sitter.

The National Portrait Gallery was perhaps the most direct expression of the historicist principle of museum collection and display. The importance of historicist assessment to the Portrait Gallery is suggested by its rule against *modern* copies of portraits (and modern copies is the precise wording), which was designed to ensure that each portrait was an authentic artefact of the period it represented. It was not copying *per se* to which the Trustees objected, to which their acquisition of numerous copies of portraits attests.⁴⁶ The production and circulation of numbers of copies of one

⁴⁴*Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery, 1852-53*, V. 35, (28): xvi. For a discussion of this view see Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images*, particularly chapters 8 and 12, the latter of which includes a discussion of Ruskin. See also Ian Jenkins, *Archaeologists and Aesthetes: In the Sculpture Galleries of the British Museum, 1800-1939*, (London: British Museum Press, 1992); and Trodd, 'Formations of Cultural Identity: Art Criticism, the National Gallery and the Royal Academy, 1820-1863', DPhil, Sussex University, 1992.

⁴⁵*Hansard*, 3d series, V. 140, col. 1772. The historical conception which underpinned this is discussed in Chapter two, section III. See also Barlow, 'The Imagined Hero As Incarnate Sign: Thomas Carlyle and the Mythology of the National Portrait in Victorian Britain'.

⁴⁶Earl Stanhope wrote to William Smith of a portrait not painted literally from the life that 'we should not be precluded from purchasing it since our Rule is directed merely against *modern* copies. The features of this pt. are so very lifelike and full of character, and the original has so popular a name, that I cannot help thinking it might form an object of great attraction to the gallery', 6 July 1860, Trustees' correspondence, NPG, London. Paul Barlow

painting was an accepted part of contemporary art practice, and the Trustees accepted it historically as well.⁴⁷ They did seek to ensure, however, that the physical object they acquired was representative of the materials and practices of the time it was intended to represent (i.e. the time during which the sitter lived). Within the historicist discourse endorsed, for instance, by the 1852 Select Committee on the National Gallery, the archaeological character of portraiture provided part of the rationale for understanding how a collection of portraits might constitute a historical representation.

Paul Barlow has argued that one of the chief attractions of portraiture was its capacity to resist the ornamental narrative elaboration of heroic lives. By choosing portraiture, the Portrait Gallery did not dispense with or reject narrative as history, but selected a genre which was conceived to narrate history in a manner which resisted the abstraction or generalisation which was then associated with French revolutionary rhetoric.⁴⁸ By emphasising the role of the particular and the personal in English history, portraits could be used to narrate a national history which was consistent with an anti-revolutionary account of the national past. The relationship between the portrait narrative and conservative or anti-revolutionary construction of English political life was made explicit by Palmerston when he announced to the House of Commons that 'owing to our own happy exemption from intestine disturbances...there existed [in England] a greater number of historical portraits than any other nation of Europe would be found to

argues 'in 'Facing the past and present: the National Portrait Gallery and search for "authentic" portraiture', in Joanna Woodall, ed., *Portraiture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997): 219-238, that the acquisition of copies and studio portraits reflects an anxiety to collect certain figures whose original portraits might not have been available. While the Trustees would undoubtedly have preferred an original portrait, it is probable that their sense of what constituted an 'original' artwork is not as exacting as late-twentieth century definitions.

⁴⁷Dianne Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity*. (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996): 70.

⁴⁸The appeal of 'naturalism' as something which might celebrate 'nature's diversity and complex variety in order to legitimate and obscure [the contrived nature of society's] political institutions and social hierarchies' is discussed by Ann Bermingham in 'System, Order, and Abstraction': 98. Alison Smith discusses the perceived opposition between French abstraction and English empiricism in mid-century art criticism in *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996): 99-111.

possess.’⁴⁹ The continuity of the political order had an important and specific political resonance in an era which had only recently seen the demise of a serious challenge to that continuity, and which now had to ensure the continued assimilation of new voters into the governing classes.

The presence of a gallery of portraits could thus be seen as an effect of the historical continuity of English government, and simultaneously function as an assertion of the significance of that condition. Even as it described a historical progress, it functioned as a quintessentially conservative account of the English past which resisted any competing narratives. One example of this resistance (and several more will emerge in the course of subsequent chapters) pertained to the acquisition of portraits of the monarchy, which was represented exclusively after the Norman conquest. While later nineteenth century liberals frequently evoked the freedoms enjoyed by ancient Britons, those Saxon ancestors could not be represented by ‘authentic’ historical portraits: by the standards of authenticity enforced in the National Portrait Gallery, there were none.⁵⁰ This exclusion of the Saxons appeared as a ‘natural’ result of the development of portraiture (and by implication, civilisation) and was not seen as an obstacle to forming the collection.

It had since its founding always been the desire of the Trustees to have the Portrait Gallery’s collection arranged chronologically, just as it had always been their desire to have a Gallery which could more easily accommodate a broader public. It was the much-deferred decision to move to the (relatively) suburban location of South Kensington, taken in conjunction with the 1867 Reform Act, that the opportunity to address that wider public was seized. Altering its admissions policy to one ‘in accordance with the established arrangements at the South Kensington Museum’, the Portrait Gallery began to open six days a week (except for maintenance closures); Mondays, Tuesdays, and Saturdays were free from the sixpence

⁴⁹*Hansard* 3d series, V. 142, col. 1114. Lord Carnarvon told the House of Lords that he was ‘strongly in favour of such a gallery, because it involved a great principle of conservatism that men of eminence should be held up for the admiration and example of future ages’. *Hansard*, 3d series, V. 140, col. 1787.

⁵⁰See Christopher Hill, ‘The Norman Yoke’, *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the 17th Century*, (London: Mercury Books, 1958): 50-122; Robert Colls, ‘Englishness and the Political Culture’, *Englishness*: 29-61

admission charged Wednesday to Friday.⁵¹ In 1879, the Gallery began to close on Fridays for maintenance, but no charge was made for admission on any of the five days it was open.⁵² This policy virtually doubled the hours that the Gallery was open, and catered a great deal more to the 'public' than did the gallery at Great George Street.

One Trustee wrote to Scharf that at South Kensington, he believed, the Portrait Gallery attracted 'a better class & not mere idlers'.⁵³ In a letter written to Earl Stanhope early in the South Kensington era, however, Scharf complained of the Easter weekend visitors using sticks, switches and umbrellas to point at the paintings, and of orange peels, nut shells and bits of paper being strewn on the floor. He claimed that this was 'very different from anything we experienced in Great George Street'.⁵⁴ The self-consciously institutional nature of the South Kensington gallery seems to have invited, if not a different class of visitors, at least different behaviour from them. Although gallery administrators were extremely conscious about the dangers posed to fine objects in the course of their public display, it was the hazards of the building rather than the umbrella wielding hordes that brought an end to the Portrait Gallery's stay at South Kensington.⁵⁵ There was continuous concern over the building's susceptibility to fire, due to the buildings around the gallery and the South Kensington Museum's insistence on using gas lighting (an important concession which was made by galleries which were committed to opening at night, after working hours) in adjacent areas.⁵⁶ Their fears were

⁵¹No change to the hours (10:00 to 6:00 in the summer) was recorded. *Fourteenth Annual Report of the Trustees*, 9 May 1871, NPG, London.

⁵²*Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Trustees*, 12 July 1879. They were of course also closed Sundays, a blanket policy for national museums until the late 1890s.

⁵³Hardinge to Scharf, undated (probably April 1876), Trustees letters to Scharf, NPG, London.

⁵⁴Scharf to Stanhope, 10 April 1871, Trustees correspondence, NPG, London.

⁵⁵Legislation was passed for the 'better protection of Works of Art, and Scientific and Literary Collections' early in the gallery building ventures, PP. 1845 (143)(182)(439) V. 4; willful damage carried a prison sentence. The protection of the paintings from environmental damage was also a significant topic for the Select Committee on the National Gallery in 1852/53.

⁵⁶The lighting of pictures by gas had been the subject of a special inquiry in 1857/58, PP. (2425) V. 24. The Chair had been Richard Redgrave, the Director of Art Schools at South Kensington, and the report had concluded that the practice was innocuous. The Portrait Gallery did not concur: complaints against the practice appear in several of the Annual Reports made during the Portrait Gallery's stay at South Kensington, 1870-85.

reasonably well-grounded, for a fire did indeed break out in at the Horticultural Gardens in 1885 - fortunately with no adverse results - but a subsequent inspection deemed the building an irremediable fire hazard, and the building was soon demolished.⁵⁷ After an unanticipatedly lengthy, but relatively contented, stay at South Kensington, the Portrait Gallery was on the move again.

The fire at South Kensington in 1885 was not extinguished by floods of government money. In 1886, its collection was transferred as a loan for two years to the South Kensington Museum at Bethnal Green (now the Museum of Childhood), another temporary solution became relatively permanent: the portraits were there for ten years. But while South Kensington was a location which the Trustees accustomed themselves to, the Portrait Gallery's officials never became reconciled to Bethnal Green as a home for the Gallery.⁵⁸ From its founding until the portraits were moved into their current primary Gallery on St. Martin's Place, the officials of the Portrait Gallery were hoping for, asking for, and finally demanding a Gallery in central London. This declared an allegiance to the culture of art display and connoisseurship which was also embodied in institutions like the National Gallery and Royal Academy, both of which had successfully resisted pressures to move out of central London during the troubled negotiations over the occupation of Trafalgar Square. An East End location was most alien to the culture of artistic practice and connoisseurship which was concentrated at Trafalgar Square, Burlington House and its environs. At Bethnal Green, the Portrait Gallery found its limits as a national institution.

III. Bethnal Green, 1885-1895: the limit of 'the national'

When the Portrait Gallery moved to Bethnal Green in 1885, its local audience was placed at odds with its intended audience: the Trustees were increasingly interested in promoting the 'high' art functions of the collection, but the community of labourers in Bethnal Green were not seen to be competent to appreciate the collection in that way. The Trustees' sense of the inappropriateness of the Bethnal Green Museum as a location for the portraits was consistent with the

⁵⁷See the minutes of a special Trustees meeting, 16 July 1885, NPG, London.

⁵⁸Hardinge wrote to Scharf in 1889 suggesting that if the Treasury persisted in being 'niggardly' they might with reasonable equanimity resign themselves to a permanent gallery in South Kensington. *New Building 1889-96*, NPG, London. *Facing Femininities*: Chapter one

generally perceived functions of galleries and museums in later nineteenth-century London.⁵⁹ Earlier in the century, the theory of providing visual education to all classes was widely accepted, although early responses to the presence of working-class visitors to the national galleries were ambivalent.⁶⁰ Towards the end of the century that ambivalence seems to have resolved into relatively clear distinctions between institutions which catered primarily for one or the other of the classes. By the time the Portrait Gallery moved to Bethnal Green, the location of the collection in a philanthropic East End museum was seen as an inappropriate use of its resources. The objections to the arrangement were founded in the distinctions made between the kinds of visual apprehension that could be expected from different audiences, and the assertion that the Bethnal Green audience could not fully or properly appreciate the National Portraits.⁶¹

By the 1880s, art exhibitions held in the periphery of central London were associated with the philanthropic education of the working-classes. The Whitechapel exhibitions and the South London Art Gallery, both of which had an agenda of basic, 'improving' visual education opened in East and South London respectively.⁶² Like those galleries, the Bethnal Green Museum was a philanthropic gesture, opened on the Bethnal Green 'Poor's Land' as a branch of the South Kensington Museum in 1876.⁶³ One of the original 'Brompton

⁵⁹The disposition of the Trustees to emphasise the fine art aspect of the collection during this period is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, section V.

⁶⁰Colin Trodd interprets the response of the National Gallery's officials to their working-class visitors as a process of articulating 'the body of the working-class subject as that which blocks out culture.' Trodd, 'Culture, Class, City': 47.

⁶¹The distinctions made between varieties of visual apprehension, and their association with class and gender, is discussed below and is the subject of Chapter 6.

⁶²Interestingly, unlike national galleries and museums these organisations frequently were administered jointly by men and women. See Giles Waterfield, ed., *Art for the People*, (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1994) and Seth Koven, 'The Whitechapel Picture Exhibitions and the Politics of Seeing', Sherman and Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994): 23-47

⁶³A.J. Robinson and D.H.B. Chessyre, *The Green*, (London: Tower Hamlets Central Library, 1986): 5-9. The Museum opened with a selection of objects from a very sophisticated collection of art and antiques: that of Sir Richard Wallace, now the Wallace Collection. A letter which he wrote to Viscount Hardinge, who was chair of the Portrait Gallery and Wallace's colleague on the Board of the National Gallery, implies that the idea of moving the NPG to Bethnal Green originated with him: undated letter in *Science and Art Department and Bethnal Green, 1865-99*, V. 1, NPG, London.

Boilers' (a term of abuse for the quick and temporary constructions which originally housed the South Kensington Museum), it was a crude and pedestrian bit of architecture which offered adequate space for the Portrait Gallery's pictures and a professional staff to care for them (figure 5).⁶⁴ The location of these institutions reflects a historical development that saw the specialisation and separation of collections for the working-classes, collections which were exhibited outside central London. Art education had literally been split between classes, and the situation of the National Portrait Gallery in a local branch of the South Kensington Museum in Bethnal Green put it on the wrong side of the divide.

The early history of museums and galleries in London was not marked by a divide in their educative functions, and the inclusion of the working man within the public served by the National Portrait Gallery was accepted and indeed encouraged throughout the early history of the National Portrait Gallery. The Easter and Whitsuntide openings were specifically designed to open the Gallery to the working-classes, and their success gratified the Gallery's administrators. The Trustees' Seventh Annual Report for 1864 included a passage from Scharf's report of the Easter opening, in which he was 'surprised to find the amount of ready knowledge which many of the visitors brought to bear on reading the names affixed to the pictures. Many of our visitors today were working men; very many were printers'. On another holiday Scharf wrote to the Chair of 'a very good field day', recording his observation of artisans and their families coming to view the pictures with appropriate interest and 'good temper'.⁶⁵ Scharf's particular mention of the artisanal occupations of the Easter visitors reveals that the officials perceived the Portrait Gallery as part of the effort to give aesthetic education to the 'manufacturing classes'.⁶⁶

⁶⁴Scharf testified to the Board of the excellent care and arrangement of the pictures at Bethnal Green, after a letter to the *Times* had slandered the Brompton Boiler. See minutes of the Trustees meeting, 30 April 1889. It was the staff at Bethnal Green who initiated much of the conservation work on the pictures in the Portrait Gallery's collection during the nineteenth century, although that was arguably because the pictures were placed in the most danger, both from the elements and from visitors, at Bethnal Green: see correspondence collected in *Science and Art Department and Bethnal Green, 1865-99*, 3 Volumes, NPG, London.

⁶⁵Scharf to Stanhope, 10 April 1871, Trustees' Correspondence, NPG, London.

⁶⁶Scharf's particular mention of printers and artisans may indicate that it was skilled and literate end of the 'manufacturing' classes which the Portrait Gallery sought to address; if the local population of Bethnal Green was not

This ambition had its roots in the very early formulation of the national museums and galleries. In 1835, a Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures was appointed to 'inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the Arts, and of the PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN among the People (especially the Manufacturing Population) of the country'.⁶⁷ Whereas efforts like the National Gallery were intended to cultivate the deliberately non-economic 'sensibilities' of the population, the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures was concerned to advance the economic competitiveness of English manufacturing. This reforming concern with the visual competence of the 'manufacturing population' did not produce a 'museum' until 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition. When the leavings of the Great Exhibition were reformed into the South Kensington Museum (later renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum) it was for explicitly economic purposes. Henry Cole, who headed the Science and Art Department which managed the museum, galleries, and schools at South Kensington (and one at Bethnal Green), was blunt in his assessment of the function of the museum; it existed to create sophisticated consumers.⁶⁸ At least one museum was founded in the nineteenth century to cultivate the economic, rather than the political, citizen.

The distinction between the reforming desire to cultivate social beings and that which sought to cultivate economic beings cannot be clearly maintained when following the early histories of London's nineteenth century galleries and museums. These two forms of citizenship were themselves closely intertwined - their relationship becomes extremely clear in discussions of the dress of visitors to the National Gallery.⁶⁹ Nor was any firm distinction drawn between the objects which would cultivate an economic or social being until late in

perceived to fit into this category, the objections of the Trustees to the location are further explained.

⁶⁷PP, *Report from the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures*, 1835 (598) V. 5 (capitalisation as in original); see also the *Report of the Select Committee with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix*, 1836 (568) V. 9.

⁶⁸See Cole quoted in Louise Purbrick, 'The South Kensington Museum: The Building of the House of Henry Cole', in *Art Apart*: 84. Her article does a fine job of accounting for the economic imperatives behind the formation of the South Kensington Museum. Thomas Richards' *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990) construes the Great Exhibition as the founding event of England's consumer society.

⁶⁹Trodd deals with this material in 'Culture, Class, City'.

the century.⁷⁰ As educative institutions, museums and galleries founded in the nineteenth century deployed an array of strategies for working on the visitors: in the 1850s even the National Gallery, which had begun as a private collection, was subjected to a programme for collection and display which was instructive as well as appreciative.⁷¹ But if the distinction between the purposes of different national collections is difficult on one level to maintain, it is important to recognise that it existed and was increasingly refined: the alienation between the art 'establishment' and the South Kensington Estate which arose over the proposal to move the National Gallery to South Kensington arose in part from the conviction that the collections were fundamentally different, and could and should not invite the same kind of spectatorship (and spectator).⁷²

The development of museums and galleries in the nineteenth century was informed by an increasing specialisation of educative purpose.⁷³ This specialisation seems in part to have been founded on the conviction that different kinds of spectatorship could be expected of different kinds of audiences. Part of the discourse of educating the 'public' through displays of objects was a proposition of corresponding complexity: it postulated that a sophisticated mind would be interested in, and apprehend, sophisticated objects, and that unsophisticated minds are best capable of comprehending unsophisticated objects. How a person was capable of understanding the pictures - whether on the level of the anecdotal, the interpretive

⁷⁰The evidence taken by the *Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures* often inquired closely into the role of fine art in design education, without conclusive result. The founding of the South Kensington Museum helped to establish a disciplinary difference between art and design objects (see Purbrick, 'The South Kensington Museum': 79-80) but since the South Kensington Museum also collected fine art and other teaching collections, that distinction was by no means secure.

⁷¹Trodd, 'Culture, Class, City'.

⁷²See section II above. In the terms of a sociological inquiry like Bennett's *Birth of the Museum*, the intentions behind the 'discipline' of museums are less critical than the nature of that discipline, though work like Carol McKay's 'Museums, curators and the mere "snapper up of unconsidered trifles": some nineteenth-century debates' demonstrates that these concepts can be, and should be, refined.

⁷³See Coombes, 'Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities', where she ascribes the consensus to the changing political status of socialism, but identifies it as one arrived at within the professional body for curators. I would argue that the professionalisation of museums staff, which took place over the course of the latter half of the nineteenth century and resulted in their ability to 'negotiate a position of relative autonomy' (57), was crucial to that consensus.

or analytical, as an example of design or an elevating work of art - was understood to be related to their 'class'. A measure of a person's education, occupation and by implication ability, class was also a measure of what benefit the collection could offer the viewer.⁷⁴ In draft notes for a letter or speech, Scharf expressed that principle through the metaphor of a meal: 'lighter and more varied food would probably suit the frequenters of galleries in outlying districts', he wrote, 'portraits are not in themselves popular and require a great amount of ready knowledge and previous study. They are solid and heavy of digestion.'⁷⁵ A contemporary description records what was considered digestible by the frequenters of galleries in outlying districts: according to one guide Animal Products and the Food Collection constituted the Bethnal Green Museum's permanent collection.⁷⁶

Scharf's notes explicitly associate the visitors' probable ability to use the Gallery with their area of residence, drawing on the common form of speech and writing which used geographical metaphors for social statements.⁷⁷ Henry James wrote of his journey to the Bethnal Green Museum that it was 'a long one, and leads you through an endless labyrinth of ever murkier and dingier alleyways and slums'.

⁷⁴This principle has been explored in a sociological study by Pierre Bourdieu, his oft-cited *Distinction*, trans. Richard Nice, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984). Regarding the nineteenth century, in *Techniques of the Observer* (London and Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992), Jonathan Crary argues that 'from the beginning of the nineteenth century a science of vision will tend to mean increasingly an interrogation of the physiological makeup of the human subject, rather than the mechanics of light and optical transmission' (70). How the physiological makeup of the viewer was used to establish their status as viewers is treated in Trodd's work on the National Gallery, and Carol McKay 'Museums, curators and the mere "snapper up of unconsidered trifles"'. Michel Foucault's work which explores the relationship between physiology and social control provides the basis for Tony Bennett's discussion of the 'disciplining' of the museum visitor; the perceived relationship between the appearance and the look of the visitor is discussed briefly by him in the chapter 'Art and Theory: the politics of the invisible', *The Birth of the Museum*: 163-173.

⁷⁵Undated notes, following those dated 7 April 1889, bound in V. 3, *Science and Art Department and Bethnal Green 1865-99*, NPG, London.

⁷⁶As described in Henry B. Wheatley, *London Past and Present*: V. 1: 180. The catalogues of these collections were held by the British Library but destroyed, probably by bombing in the 1940s. Other collections were exhibited simultaneously: figure 5 shows the cabinets with unidentifiable objects which may have been part of the animal products or food collections on the ground floor of the museum; other photographs taken at the same time show that prints and framed paintings were also exhibited on the ground floor.

⁷⁷Griselda Pollock, 'Vicarious Excitements: London: A Pilgrimage by Gustave Dore and Blanchard Jerrold, 1872,' *New Formations*, 1988, 4: 32.

These associations of dirt and danger with the East End were exaggerated in the late 1880s by the Jack the Ripper murders in Whitechapel and the sensational stories on child prostitution which were run in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.⁷⁸ Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, the East End - and by implication, its residents - were represented as labyrinthine and inaccessible, unknowable and dangerous. Scharf explicitly disconnected the East End from the class of the Gallery's (suitable) visitors when he noted that the journey to Bethnal Green was 'the most unprofitable & uninviting possible. The most cultivated and professional class of London inhabitants cannot spare the time required in performing pilgrimages of this nature'.⁷⁹ Divided by the labyrinthine East End, the Portrait Gallery and its 'public' could not be joined, physically or notionally, whilst the Gallery remained at Bethnal Green.

The Portrait Gallery's 'public' could not be joined to the Bethnal Green Museum, nor was there any effort made to join the 'public' at the Bethnal Green Museum to the National Portrait Gallery. Having the collection at Bethnal Green might have offered an opportunity for historical and art education, but the founding intention to offer lectures and classes at the Bethnal Green Museum had been thwarted by an unwillingness on the part of its governors to apply to the Treasury for the funds. The Reverend Septimus Hansard's tireless campaign of letter writing to the newspapers made no dent in their resistance.⁸⁰ The reluctance to offer expanded educational opportunities at the Museum also applied to the National Portraits: in 1886, the Bishop of Bedford offered to organise and publicise free lectures on the portraits at his own expense, an offer which was instantly declined by the South Kensington Museum officials on the grounds of lack of appropriate space.⁸¹ The authorities showed a distinct unwillingness to dedicate extra resources to expanding the educational functions of the Bethnal Green Museum even when they appeared to be readily available, which can only be explained as a

⁷⁸On Stead and sensationalism see Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

⁷⁹Undated notes, following those dated 7 April 1889, bound in V. 3, *Science and Art Department and Bethnal Green*, NPG Muniments.

⁸⁰See Ed. 84/240: 7155; 7157; 907; 882;-4181; and 4559, National Art Library Archives, London.

⁸¹ Ed. 84/240: 6443, National Art Library Archives, London.

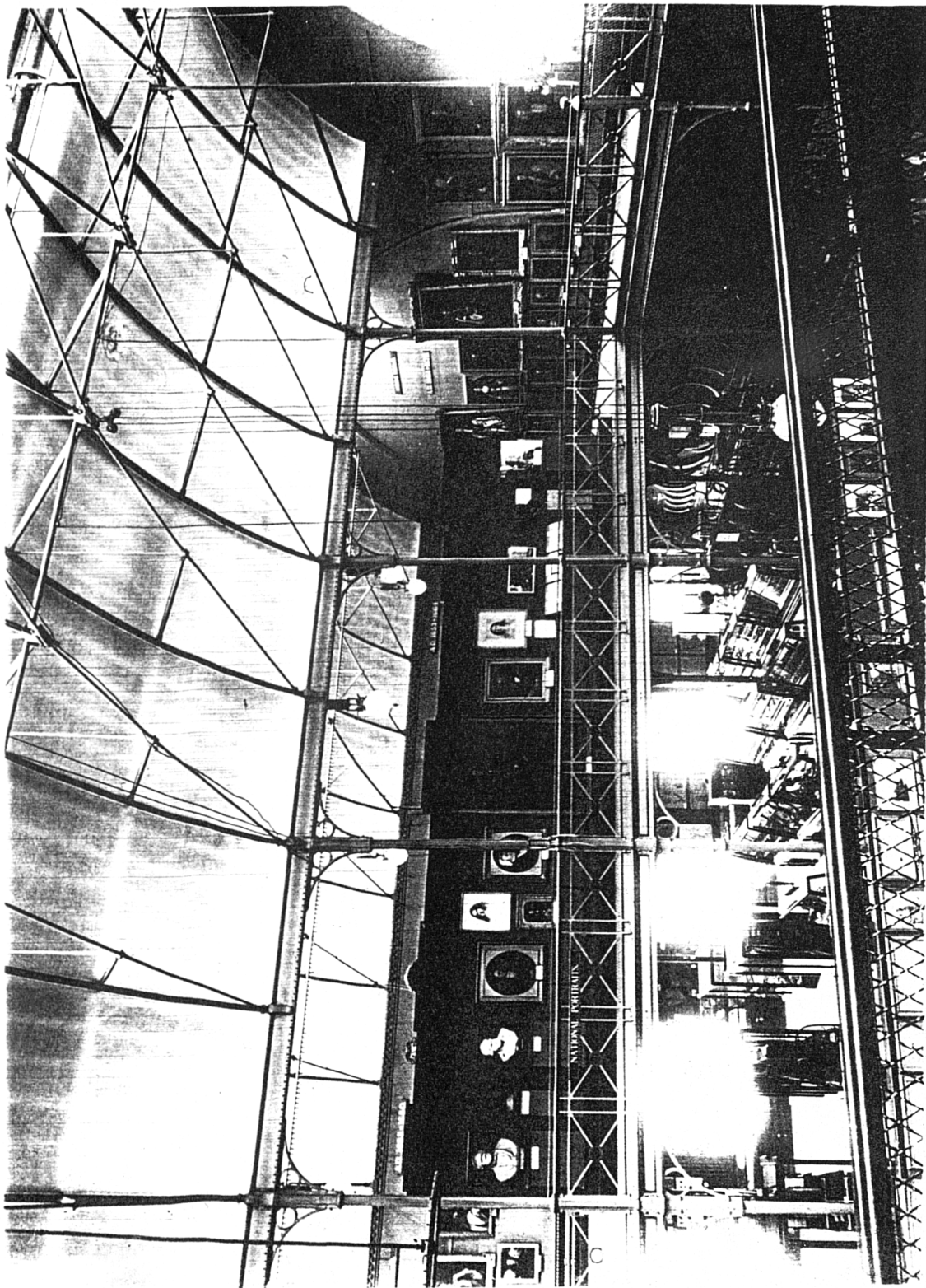


Figure 5. Interior of the Bethnal Green Museum showing the National Portrait Gallery installed; portraits of George Eliot and Elizabeth Barrett Browning in view. Photograph courtesy the NPG, London.

product of the officials' scepticism about the capacity of the local population to benefit from such instruction.⁸² One official of the South Kensington Museum wrote to his superiors that 'those who are best acquainted with the people' of Bethnal Green did not believe that they were 'elevated by the contemplation of these portraits'.⁸³

It comes as no surprise that when the agreed period for the loan of the Portrait Gallery to the Bethnal Green Museum expired in 1888, the Trustees began to agitate vociferously in Parliament and press for their own building. A special deputation to Whitehall presented a petition signed by 339 luminaries of the art world, which stated that the gallery was 'absolutely unavailable to the great majority of those who desire to visit it'.⁸⁴ What was complained of most was the collection's inaccessibility, resulting from its having been banished to the 'wilds of Bethnal Green'.⁸⁵ In 1889 a letter appeared in the *Times* which, in addition to making complaints about the 'Brompton Boiler', claimed that no convenient means of transport could be found to traverse the distance from Central London to Bethnal Green, and that the neighbourhood was lacking in necessary amenities such as restaurants. Another reader pointed out that cabs were plentiful and that there were refreshment rooms in the galleries. Despite his assertion that 'many a household on this side of London has rejoiced to have this exhibition within reach,' the Trustees were determined to return the collection to central London.⁸⁶

There is no recorded concession from any Portrait Gallery official that Bethnal Green might be a suitable place for the collection. Their conviction on this matter was given form in the Trustees' Annual

⁸²Richard Wallace suggested that the revenues from the exhibition of his collection should be directed in this fashion, but his suggestion was given scant consideration. National Art Library Archives, Ed. 84/240: 907.

⁸³This opinion followed an attack by hairpin on seventeen of the portraits, described in a report from the South Kensington Museum, 30 August 1889, V. 3, *Science and Art Department and Bethnal Green, 1865-99*, NPG, London. Document 10975 in Ed.84/240, National Art Library, London is an 1893 minute paper which records the deliberations of the South Kensington Museum officials on what sort of display should replace the National Portraits: they are by no means unanimously agreed on the director's recommendation that the Museum include a display of modern pictures.

⁸⁴See the minutes of a special meeting of the Trustees, 5 June 1888, NPG, London.

⁸⁵'The New National Portrait Gallery', *Illustrated London News*, 11 April 1896, 108: 452.

⁸⁶This volley of correspondence appears in the *Times* of the 23, 25 and 29 April, 1889.

Reports, which not only annually demanded a resolution to the gallery's lack of a permanent home, but made it appear as if it had no home at all. Ostensibly because the admission figures could not be calculated for the Portrait Gallery only, the Trustees stopped including current attendance figures in their annual reports after 1887; those would have shown that although the number of visitors dropped by a very small proportion in the year the Portrait Gallery moved to Bethnal Green, it there received four times the number of visitors it had at South Kensington.⁸⁷ Whilst omitting the attendance figures for the Bethnal Green Museum, the Trustees' annual reports did continue to include the figures recorded at Great George Street and at South Kensington; the rhetorical effect of this decision was to make it appear as if the Gallery was never visited after 1885. The limits of the Trustees' commitment to public education were reached at Bethnal Green: when the Gallery became inconveniently located for the connoisseurs and students whose orbit was the Royal Academy and National Gallery, it was, according to the Trustees' reports, effectively shut down.

IV. 1896: the Portrait Gallery returned to the centre of national culture

The protest against residence at the Bethnal Green Museum marks an interesting shift in the audience cultivated by the National Portrait Gallery. Where the Gallery's early history was directly and explicitly involved in the construction of the political and economic nation, by the end of the century it was relatively clear its function was seen in the context of catering for the appreciation of the fine arts. Its final move in 1896 to its present, purpose-built gallery in St. Martin's Lane

⁸⁷Scharf complained of the method of counting visitors mechanically as they passed through the turnstile (also used at South Kensington) that 'vagrant children of a very tender age count the same as grown up cultivated persons'. It was not just a matter of being unable to count visitors, but being unable to count the right visitors. Undated notes, following those dated 7 April 1889, bound in V. 3, *Science and Art Department and Bethnal Green 1865-99*, NPG, London. The *Trustees Annual Report* for 1887 records that in 1886, the Bethnal Green Museum received 446,722 visitors. The greatest number of visitors recorded to the National Portrait Gallery at South Kensington was 120, 716. The extraordinary attendance figures were encouraged by the Bethnal Green Museum's liberal hours: it was open in the evenings (until 10pm) on three of the days when admission was free, which in 1888 were altered to Saturdays, Mondays and Thursdays in order to make the Museum available on the evenings which were customarily the early closing days in the neighbourhood.

was (in this narrative) a resolution of what had been the rather vexing questions of who would be addressed, and how, by the Gallery. The location, architecture, and general presentation of the new Gallery allied it neither with parliamentary politics nor industrial development, but primarily with London's élite institutions of fine art practice and exhibition. This signifies what was in one respect a profound alteration in the Portrait Gallery's purposes.

Resolved at least that at Bethnal Green the Portrait Gallery did not address the nation, the Trustees sought to return the Gallery to the centre of national culture as it had been landscaped in the metropolis by the gallery-builders and art establishment of the nineteenth century. In the late 1880s, the Trustees enquired into the suitability of premises of the old Madame Tussaud's in Baker Street (with reservations about that association), and Waterloo House in Pall Mall.⁸⁸ Desperate to land a West End site, their opportunity came finally in 1889, when Lord Salisbury, the Prime Minister, announced at the Royal Academy's annual dinner that an anonymous donor had offered money to build a gallery: it was the private patrons of the fine arts who finally paid out on behalf of national culture.⁸⁹ While Salisbury was the least likely of Prime Ministers to advance the cause of the Portrait Gallery, the gift also signifies changes that were taking place within the institutional culture of the Portrait Gallery.⁹⁰ While the aesthetic function of the collection was never formally instantiated, the choices of the Trustees both of portraits and of exhibiting strategies were increasingly concerned with the collection's aesthetic impact.⁹¹

As it was reconceived during the years that the new gallery was being planned, the National Portrait Gallery was designed to serve a

⁸⁸See Trustees' correspondence and Trustees' letters to Scharf, October - December 1888; also documents in *New Building 1889-1896*, NPG, London.

⁸⁹The offer is recorded in the minutes of the Trustees meeting on 22 May 1889.

⁹⁰Lord Blake and Hugh Cecil, eds., *Salisbury: The Man and His Politics*, (London: Macmillan, 1987) give a number of clues why Salisbury was not a Prime Minister who might favourably regard the Portrait Gallery. In his introduction, Lord Blake characterises Salisbury as 'the least sentimental of Conservatives' (6), for whom a Portrait Gallery would hold little appeal; his daughter Lady Gwendolyn Cecil recorded that he 'always proclaimed himself in matters of art a philistine' (35), and that he was myopic, unobservant, and had a 'striking...incapacity for recognising faces' (34).

⁹¹This important theme is discussed with respect to the collection in Chapter 2, section IV; and again in Chapter 6, section III.

constituency comprised as much of artists and connoisseurs as the political nation. The philanthropist who provided the funds for the new gallery was W.H. Alexander, a collector of Asian antiquities who was promptly offered a position on the Gallery's Board. The primary condition of his offer to build the Gallery was that the government provide the site, which was to be located within a one and half mile radius of St. James Street (a geography which, not incidentally, had clubland as its centre). This included most of central London, but its exclusions are significant: the South Kensington Estate falls just on the perimeter, and its eastern limit falls roughly at Blackfriars Bridge, excluding the City and anything further east. Barring the possibility of Waterloo, the new National Portrait Gallery was deliberately to be situated within the West End (see figure 1).⁹² The government sealed the Portrait Gallery's status as a fine art exhibiting institution when it offered the plot north and east of the National Gallery, and made it a neighbour not only of the National Gallery, but also the Royal Academy, the Slade School, and the art dealers and commercial galleries on New Bond Street.

The links that were formed between these neighbouring institutions and the National Portrait Gallery existed on more levels than architecture and geography. Increasingly, the most active Trustees were those appointed from the art world - Frederic Leighton, John Everett Millais, Sir Coutts-Lindsay and Richard Wallace were all on the Board during this time - and the influence of their expertise and professionalism was brought to bear on the administration and the collection of the National Portrait Gallery.⁹³ The geographical location and physical arrangement of the Gallery were importantly connected to their conception of how the Gallery should function. Art students were frequently cited as important constituents for the Gallery to serve, and Scharf was never reluctant to assert that in order to conduct his work he needed to be located

⁹²On class and geography in the West End see P.J. Atkins, 'The Spatial Configuration of Class Solidarity in London's West End, 1792-1939', *Urban History Yearbook 1990* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990): 36-65; on women in the west end see Lynn Walker, 'Vistas of pleasure: women consumers of urban space in the West End of London 1850-1900', in *Women in the Victorian Art World*, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995): 89-106, and Erika Rappaport *Shopping For Pleasure: Gender, Commerce and Public Life in London's West End 1860-1914*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming 1999).

⁹³This is discussed in more detail in Chapter two, section V.
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‘within call of Christies, the British Museum and co.’⁹⁴ The ‘nation’ that they imagined themselves to be a part of, and imagined the National Portrait Gallery to be a part of, was the nation of educated connoisseurship. But if it was within the nation of educated connoisseurship that the new National Portrait Gallery was to be placed, that positioning was negotiated with the Portrait Gallery’s functions as a representation of national history.

That the St. Martin’s Lane Gallery was understood to cater for a somewhat different nation than was served in Westminster or Bethnal Green is revealed in Scharf’s initial plans for the hang in the new gallery, which negotiated the historical and artistic functions of the collection in a new fashion. Scharf circulated a plan to the Trustees which proposed that the pictures be divided according to their artistic merit, so that the best portraits could be placed on the third floor where the skylights provided the best light. ‘Chronological order to be strictly observed’, he insisted, ‘but each floor will have its own independent chronological sequence’.⁹⁵ This proposal suggests that Scharf, and the aesthetically minded Chairman of the Board, Viscount Hardinge, were increasingly inclined to cater to the discerning eyes of the Royal Academy students and patrons of the National Gallery under whose purview the national portraits would soon be placed. If that was their intention, it died with them: sadly, Scharf and Hardinge died before the new gallery was completed. Under their new Chair, the Baron De L’Isle and Dudley, the Trustees directed ‘that the arrangement should be as far as possible strictly chronological without reference to the artistic merit of the paintings or sculpture. This decision was made in consequence of their opinion that it is as a *historical* collection, rather than as a collection of works of art, that the National Portrait Gallery has a claim upon the interest of the public.’⁹⁶

The negotiations around the designs for the new building were mainly conducted in terms of its status as an art gallery. The Portrait

⁹⁴In the protest against Bethnal Green Scharf uses the term ‘real art students’, distinguishing them perhaps from mere spectators, or perhaps from the students from the South Kensington schools; Scharf to Mitford at the Office of the Works, 16 July 1885, V. I, *Science and Art Department and Bethnal Green 1865-99*, NPG, London.

⁹⁵*New Building 1889-1896*, NPG, London.

⁹⁶*Thirty-third Annual Report of the Trustees*, 1895, NPG, London. Emphasis added.

Gallery's officials debated how the relationship between the Portrait Gallery and the National Gallery should be represented architecturally, a matter which also concerned the administration of the National Gallery.⁹⁷ Hardinge wrote to the Office of the Works in 1890 that 'there is considerable unanimity of opinion that the character of the New National Portrait Gallery should be in harmony with the existing Elevation of the National Gallery, and I rather gather from what fell from Mr. Christian when he shewed Mr. Scharf and myself the ground plans that he is not inclined to adhere to such a principle.'⁹⁸ Some of the Trustees of the Portrait Gallery were hoping for a building which would blend with, and hence affirm the comparability of the two institutions, although the final plan compromised with a wing with a neo-classical elevation that matches the National Gallery where the buildings meet, but present the main gallery in an italianate style. The interior galleries of Christian's building are smaller and more austere than those of the National Gallery: that arrangement reflected the conviction that smaller galleries provided ease of navigation and a less tiring environment for the visitor, and were aesthetically better suited to the Portrait Gallery's plainer educational objectives (figure 6).⁹⁹ The design of the building asserts the National Portrait Gallery as a separate institution, but in a way which invites comparison with the National Gallery rather than, for instance, its opposite neighbour St. Martin's Church.

Back within the orbit of the students of the Royal Academy, the historians reading in the British Library, the Antiquaries and the visitors to the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery was again available to 'that class' of visitors to whom it intended primarily to cater. The considerations, and decisions, taken by the Gallery's administrators in preparation for the move reflect their consciousness that the Portrait Gallery would now serve an audience which included a specialist group of artists, collectors and connoisseurs. This audience was no longer distinguished as at

⁹⁷See Trustees letters to Scharf during May 1889; also Port, *Imperial London*: 38.

⁹⁸Hardinge to Plunket, February 21, 1890, *New Building 1889-1896*, NPG, London.

⁹⁹Scharf's printed list of requirements for the new building is included in *New Building 1889-1896*, NPG, London; this opinion had been expressed as early as the Trustees' meeting of 4 December 1867, when a building in Trafalgar Square was being contemplated; see also Port, *Imperial London*: 187, and Waterfield, *Palaces of Art*: 111-112.

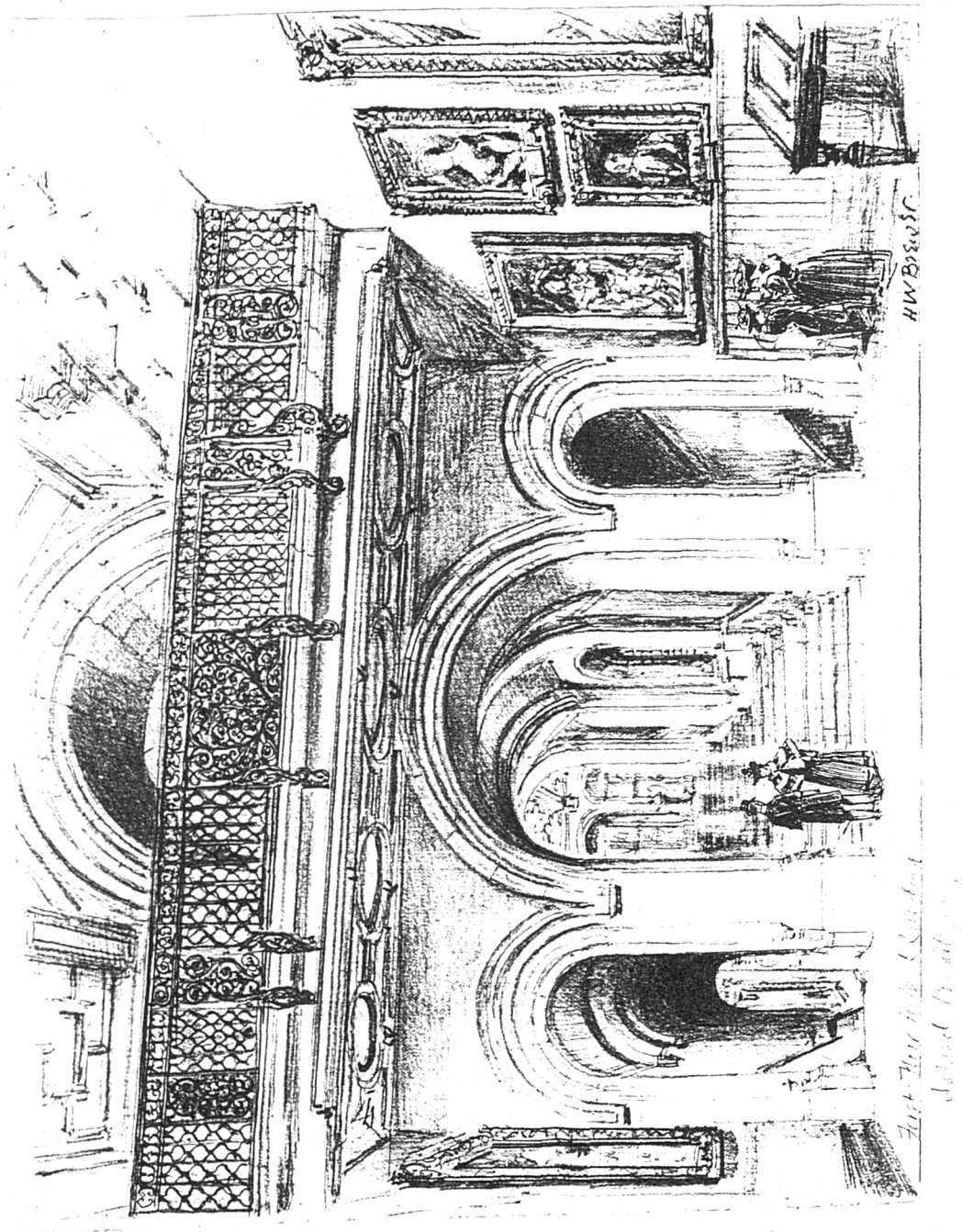


Figure 6: H.W. Brewer, *First Floor Hall and Landing, National Portrait Gallery, St. Martin's Place; NPG, London*. The new Gallery was spacious, but less ornate than the neighbouring National Gallery.

Westminster principally by their participation in national government, but also by their participation in various institutionalised kinds of artistic activity, whether practice, collecting and related trading, or connoisseurship. The ways in which this audience was catered for in the location, architecture and design of the new National Portrait Gallery signifies its participation in changing forms of national life, but only those forms of corporate cultural activity which sustained the gendered practices of national politics: the Royal Academy and its fellow learned societies at Burlington House, the administration of the National Gallery and indeed the National Portrait Gallery were, like Parliament, institutions which continued to be dominated by men and masculine interests.

V. Conclusion: Grace Darling in place at the Portrait Gallery

The history of the development of the National Portrait Gallery between 1856 and 1899 begins with a few paintings stored in a private apartment and ends with a collection of over twelve hundred portraits exhibited in a large, purpose-built public gallery situated in the centre of London. The states of the Portrait Gallery between these two dates represent various stages in the negotiation of the Portrait Gallery's programme of exhibition and education, stages in which it experimented with different kinds of presentation to different kinds of audience. The successes and failures of each of these experiments indicate the kinds of purposes which the administrators of the Portrait Gallery hoped it would serve in the development of 'national' life and culture, and suggest some of the key themes which informed its process of collection, particularly the portraits of women which are the main subject of this study.

The development of the collection was informed by the educative ambitions of the administrators in addressing the audience for the National Portrait Gallery, and understanding those ambitions helps to understand and explain some of the Trustees' choices for the collection. How the relationship between the administrators and the Portrait Gallery's audience influenced the selection of portraits for presentation is most aptly illustrated through an example: a portrait of Grace Darling, one of only a few depicting working-class women that was collected by the Portrait Gallery. Grace Darling had, with her father, bravely rescued several persons from the *Forfarshire* which

shipwrecked near the lighthouse where the family lived. This kind of heroic rescue was a national event usually celebrated, when the hero or heroine was working-class, as an example of the heroism of everyday life.¹⁰⁰ In 1867 the Portrait Gallery was offered what had been confirmed by the President of the Academy of Fine Arts, Manchester as a genuine portrait of Grace Darling; Scharf was instructed to make enquiries after the portrait, which were mysteriously without result.¹⁰¹ While interesting, Grace Darling's portrait was not urgently required by the National Portrait Gallery in 1867.

By the 1890s, after the Portrait Gallery moved to Bethnal Green, Grace Darling's image acquired a new attraction. She was the sitter for a marble bust acquired in 1895 as a loan from the National Gallery, a loan which had been agreed in principle in 1890.¹⁰² At the time the loan was first agreed, Scharf had been reluctant to take possession of the bust, as he was reluctant to take possession of all portraits acquired by the Gallery while it was exhibited at the Bethnal Green Museum. The Chairman of the Board, Viscount Hardinge (who was then also a Trustee of the National Gallery) wrote to Scharf in 1890 to encourage him to take possession of and display the portrait, in a manner that suggests that it was precisely because the Gallery was at the Bethnal Green that the bust was acquired: 'busts ought to elevate!'¹⁰³, he wrote, implying that it was the residents of Bethnal Green who might be elevated by a portrait of an 'ordinary' national heroine. It was a matter of urgency, to the Chairman at least, that Grace Darling be displayed to the East Enders.

¹⁰⁰Another salient example of female heroics was the secular canonization of Alice Ayres, who rescued her employer's children from a house fire at the expense of her own life. Walter Crane designed a mural on this theme for Octavia Hill's Red Cross settlement in South London: see Gillian Darley, *Octavia Hill* (London: Constable, 1990): 240-41; the design is reproduced in Grey Smith and Sarah Hyde, ed., *Walter Crane 1845-1915*, (London: Lund Humphries and Whitworth, 1989): 106-07.

¹⁰¹Entry 87 H/5, *Register of Offers*, NPG, London. The offer was of a panel portrait of Grace Darling by H.P. Parker, who made at least two paintings, and several sketches, of Grace Darling in 1838. Stanhope wrote 'enquire' after the entry in the Offers Book, and the owner offered to send the portrait for inspection; there is however no record of the portrait having been seen by the Trustees.

¹⁰²NPG 998. Possession of the bust must subsequently have been transferred (at least formally) to the Tate Gallery, which then transferred it to the NPG in 1957.

¹⁰³Correspondence regarding the loan, including this letter dated June 6, 1890, is filed in Registry documents for the portrait, NPG, London.

If Grace Darling's portrait was intended to elevate and inspire the citizens of Bethnal Green, one of its instructive qualities was that it celebrated a heroic act played out within certain approved conventions of gender. Grace Darling was heroic as a daughter in the company of her father, and engaged with the perils of sea travel in the context of a humanitarian rescue mission. Her motives and actions were womanly, and the white marble bust which was selected to represent her in the Portrait Gallery presents a modest and conventional image of working young womanhood: about life-size, it shows the heroically square-jawed, solemn-faced sitter in a plain shawl with her hair tied back (figure 6). This portrait stands in great contrast to that of another female seafaring hero which was rejected by the Board at about the same time, a portrait of Hannah Snell (1732-1792), soldier (figure 7). Hannah Snell disguised herself as a man and enlisted in the Marines, completing a five year tour of duty including service in the East Indies. She was celebrated by contemporaries, but her portrait 'in regimentals and cocked hat' was declined by the Trustees at their meeting of 16 February 1883.¹⁰⁴ Whether it was the nature of her potentially violent military service, or the nature of her image which showed her in its masculine uniform, that caused the Trustees to refuse her portrait is not clear; but it seems almost certain that her portrait was rejected because her biography was unconventionally, if not perversely, gendered. Women's occupation of masculine roles, for instance the military rather than humanitarian patrol of the nation's (and empire's) watery borders, was not countenanced.

The acquisition of a portrait of Grace Darling (and exclusion of a portrait of Hannah Snell) was not only a lesson in femininity, but implied a lesson in masculinity as well, one which supported the celebration of an élite masculinity consistent with the social and cultural orientations of the National Portrait Gallery, particularly in this later period. Grace Darling's heroic rescue was a sort of physical

¹⁰⁴Minutes of the Trustees' meetings, NPG, London. An engraving in the National Portrait Gallery's collection confirms that such a portrait of Hannah Snell was painted by James Wardell during her lifetime, so it may have been an eligible offer according to the specific criteria for acquisition (discussed in the introduction to Chapter two); the direction 'no' placed next to the entry in the Registry of Offers suggests that the offer was not even considered at a meeting of the Trustees.



Figure 7. David Dunbar, *Grace Darling* (1815-42)
Marble bust, 63.5 high, 1838, NPG 998



Figure 8. John Johnson after James Wardell, *Hannah Snell*
 (1732-1792)

Mezzotint engraving, no date, National Portrait Gallery Engravings
 Collection

effort which was usually, but problematically, celebrated in working-class men. Earlier in the century the heroic rescue had been glorified on canvas by Millais, who painted a muscular, square-jawed fireman returning three small children to their kneeling and desperate mother (*The Rescue*, R.A. 1855). As Robyn Cooper points out in her article on *The Rescue*, the working-class man playing hero to the middle-class woman makes an issue of the masculinity of the absent father: where was he at the moment of domestic danger?¹⁰⁵ The potential challenge to élite masculinity represented by working-class male heroism was circumvented in the Portrait Gallery's commemoration of the 'Forfarshire' rescue by its celebration through the female half of the heroic pair: although Grace Darling's co-rescuer, her father, had been equally celebrated and painted at the time of the event, his portrait has never been acquired by the National Portrait Gallery.

The decision to found the Portrait Gallery and all the subsequent decisions which shaped its cultural work - its location, its architecture, and crucially, its collection - were designed to produce a narrative of national life that would instruct (some of) the nation in an ideal of citizenship which was consistent with the values of its administrators. The (re)production of a gendered image of the nation was one of the educative principles at stake in the development of National Portrait Gallery's exhibition programme, and its collection. If the National Portrait Gallery was primarily concerned with defining (or at least exploring within certain limits) national masculinity, images of women had an important role to play in asserting its limits. The more particular criteria for selecting portraits for the collection, and the ways that women's portraits were included or excluded by them, are the subject of the following chapter.

¹⁰⁵Robyn Cooper, "Millais's *The Rescue*: A painting of a 'dreadful interruption of domestic peace'", *Art History* 1986, 9(4): 482.
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CHAPTER TWO

PORTRAITURE AND PATRIARCHY

The first chapter of this thesis surveyed the motives behind the founding of the National Portrait Gallery, and the way it positioned itself as a public institution. This chapter begins to outline the nature of its address to its audience by sketching the general principles which were employed to develop the National Portrait Gallery's collection during the nineteenth century. It also sketches the ways that those principles were gendered, and suggests how the gender of those contexts might have been imported into or implicated in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery. The collection was assembled as a narrative of English history, a narrative which valorised certain patterns of female behaviour (the precise shape of this narrative is explored in detail in following chapters). That narrative was created not by 'history', but by the Portrait Gallery's Board of Trustees. The Trustees set the terms which defined the group of objects which were eligible for acquisition, and then selected certain objects from that group for the Gallery's collection and directed its presentation. The collection of the Portrait Gallery consisted of historical portraiture, but was composed of, and through, the practices and prejudices of the Trustees.

The actual process of acquisition is simple to describe. The Board of Trustees, usually numbering around a dozen men at any given time (an annotated list of their names is Appendix 1 to this thesis), convened monthly during Parliamentary sessions to consider offers of portraits for sale, for donation or bequest. If any portrait met the criteria for acquisition (that it was an 'authentic' portrait representing a deceased person of historical interest), and the necessary funds for its purchase and maintenance were available, the Trustees would instruct the administrator to accept it (if a gift) or make an offer for it (if for sale).¹ In this manner, the Trustees selected and acquired

¹After operating for a year under slightly different rules, the Trustees determined on six rules which remained unchanged during the period of this study, and which are here paraphrased: I) 'to look to the celebrity of the person represented rather than the merit of the artist... [and to agree that the portrait is] valuable, as illustrating the civil, ecclesiastical, or literary history of the country'; II) No portrait of a living person except the reigning monarch and his or her consort would be admitted; III) The acquisition of a portrait of any sitter dead for less than ten years required the approval of three-fourths of the Trustees; IV) The acceptance of a donation required the approval of three-fourths of the Trustees; V) No modern copy of an original portrait would be admitted; and VI) Three Trustees were required for quorum. See the Second Annual Report of the Trustees, April 1859, NPG, London.

over 1100 portraits for the collection between 1856 and 1899. But if the process of acquisition is easily described, the motives and opinions which directed it are very difficult to reconstruct.

The reasons for any one, or all, of the nineteenth-century Trustees' choices for the Portrait Gallery are not well-documented. While the formal rules for acquisition specified that the sitter be a person of historical interest, those rules did not define the kind of achievement which merited an individual's recognition in the Gallery, and there is no record of this problem being discussed by the Trustees in a general way before 1931.² The minutes of the Trustees' meetings usually record only that they did or did not accept the portraits presented: occasionally the documents concerning an offer record the Trustees' determination that the sitter was insufficiently famous or the portrait unsuitable for the collection, but the standards against which those judgements were made were never positively expressed.³ The vast numbers of portraits which were rejected by the Trustees, sometimes fifty or sixty in a single meeting, suggests that there must have been something *like* an acquisitions policy guiding the Trustees' decisions; but it was one so vaguely expressed it barely deserves the name.

It is not possible to refer to any institutional policy to understand the decisions of the Trustees in selecting portraits, and neither is it possible to systematically refer to the opinions of the Trustees as individuals. Over the course of the nineteenth century fifty-two men were appointed to the Board, and each of these fifty-two Trustees

²This issue was raised when the proposal for the National Portrait Gallery was first debated in the Houses of Parliament, although the Members raising objections or problems were not amongst those subsequently appointed to the Board of Trustees: see *Hansard*, 3d Series, V.140, cols. 1775-84 and Vol. 142, cols. 113-24. In 1931, the serving Trustees submitted letters to the Chair 'On the Admissibility of Portraits'. The letters, now preserved in the NPG, address the question in diverse ways.

³Each portrait offered was given a unique reference number, which allows for cross-referencing between different sets of documents, including the Trustees' minutes, the Trustees' correspondence with vendors, the Registry of Offers, and sketchbooks kept by the administrator, George Scharf (see fn. 6 below). Together, these various documents can sometimes offer insight into the Trustees' opinions about portraits which were acquired as well as those rejected, though they rarely provide much insight into the Trustees' general ambitions for the collection. Later in the century the minutes become more descriptive about the reasons for accepting or rejecting portraits, but some cases (like that of Lydia Becker discussed below), suggest that those descriptions can be deceptive, as likely to represent polite obfuscation as the Trustees' real motives.

had peculiar areas of expertise and interest which were brought to bear on the Gallery. Occasionally the impact of an individual Trustee's opinion is evident in a particular acquisition, but with a few exceptions, the influence of individuals is impossible to detect.⁴ Difference or discord of opinion between the Trustees was erased by institutional courtesy: topics of dispute or instances of disagreement are not acknowledged in the minutes, but can be confirmed only by mentions in the Portrait Gallery's small sample of the Trustees' personal correspondence.⁵ It is only rarely possible to attribute, or even describe from recorded evidence an opinion that decided for or against the offer of any particular portrait.

The National Portrait Gallery's records represent the vast majority of the Trustees' decisions as the result of a unitary and common, if unspecified and undefined, will. But discounting the impossibility that decisions were dictated by one individual, the effective unity represented by each recorded decision of the Board must represent some degree of accord between the meeting's attending members, whether based on deference or discussion.⁶ This chapter seeks to explain some of the possible grounds for agreement that must have at

⁴All that is usually recorded of individual Trustees in the minutes is that they were present, although informal documentation sometimes reveals the power behind a particular decision: for example, at one meeting Gladstone's opinion went conclusively against Sir Hope and Sir Charles Napier (whose portrait was acquired in 1908, thirteen years after Gladstone retired from the Board), whose portraits seem to have been supported by the Board Chairman, Viscount Hardinge. Hardinge reported this result to Scharf in a letter of 28 August 1878, which he concludes with the observation 'It seems as if no military man shd. be admitted in his view unless he is a Wellington or a Marlborough. If it were the case of admitting some Ritualistic Divine his tone wd. probably change.' Trustees' correspondence, NPG, London.

⁵See for example the instances cited above. Only one instance of a rift serious enough to cause Board members to abandon (but not resign) their posts is recorded in the annals of the nineteenth-century NPG, and the motive for the abandonment is revealed in private letters, not official correspondence: see fn. 85 below. The correspondence amongst the Trustees has not been deposited in the NPG archives, nor has it been catalogued. The results of consulting the archives of a few pertinent Trustees suggest that a comprehensive survey of the individual Trustees' correspondence would be a useful, but not conclusive, tool for writing a more complete institutional history of the Portrait Gallery.

⁶It appears, from the notes in the Registry of Offers, that the Chairman of the Board had first refusal and could select which portraits were actually presented to the Board meeting; but since not all offers were accepted it is clear that the other members of the Board contributed to decisions. Usually between three and eight members attended any given meeting, some more regularly than others. The investigations for this project did not extend to calculating and evaluating which Board members were in attendance at the meetings that accepted or rejected certain groups of portraits, though such a refinement would be possible and potentially illuminating.

least underpinned each positive decision for or against a portrait. The kinds of criteria used, and the kinds of expertise brought to bear on portrait evaluation are suggested by the language used to record the decisions, and confirmed by the patterns of affiliation and membership which can be detected in the list of the Board and their activities indicated in Appendix 1.

The list of Board members and their activities shows that over the nominated period, the members of the Board were appointed from a few key organisations and occupations: 32 Trustees (62%) were members of Parliament; 17 Trustees (33%), including all the Chairmen, were members of the Society of Antiquaries, with an additional 7 members (bringing the total to 24 or 46%) having other identifiable historical interests; 23 members (44%) were involved with the art world, either as practitioners, collectors, or administrators. Virtually all of the Trustees were active in one or more of these areas: if it is not possible to identify their differences, it is at least possible to identify some of the interests and knowledges that were shared by significant proportions of the group, particularly during certain periods when the active Board members were drawn principally from one cohort (most notably historians and antiquaries during the early period of this thesis, and connoisseurs and artists later). This chapter explores the processes of portrait selection as a function of the Trustees' shared knowledge and interests, and assumes that the formal rules for acquisition were a summary formulation of a broader set of common intellectual resources which were cultivated in, and out, of the Board meetings.⁷

⁷I include in this community Sir George Scharf Jr. (1820-95), chief administrator for the Gallery from 1857 to 1895, not only because he was ultimately appointed to the Board of Trustees, but because he shared many of the same interests and was a loyal - sometimes obsequious - servant of the Board. Scharf was a keen researcher and record-keeper, and his contributions in this regard are discussed mainly in section IV of this chapter. He became the undisputed authority on historic portraiture during his lifetime, writing in the margin of a proof of one of his own articles, 'Ah that's the gentleman who is always finding out that everybody is somebody else'. Unfortunately he kept his inside knowledge of the Trustees' machinations to himself; he preserved letters by others addressed to himself, but his diaries and letters do not record the content of Trustees' meetings his opinions of their work. The loyalty of his service is reflected in his career history, most of which was spent in the service of the NPG. The son of a German draughtsman who enjoyed a successful career in London as an illustrator and lithographer, Scharf Jr. was trained at the Royal Academy, and then worked as a draughtsman and illustrator of books on art and antiquities. He had a hand in co-ordinating art displays at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and at the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857. He was appointed Secretary and Keeper of the NPG in 1857; *Facing Femininities: Chapter two* p. 82

Section I sketches the network of sociability and labour which linked the Trustees, paying particular attention to the masculine sociability of Parliamentary participation to suggest the gendered context within which the Trustees lived and worked. Section II maps the extended network of the Trustees who were the donors and dealers who offered portraits to the Gallery, and who thereby shaped the field of portraits from which the collection was assembled. Section III explores the literary and pictorial sources (i.e. existing collections of portraiture or portrait engravings) to which the Trustees referred in establishing sitters' historical significance; section IV discusses antiquarianism, the main scholarly tool for establishing a portrait's 'authenticity' and eligibility for acquisition; and finally section V concerns the aesthetic assessment of portraiture. These represent the primary discourses and practices which worked together, through the Trustees, to shape the nineteenth century collection of the National Portrait Gallery.

The work of the Trustees, in and out of the National Portrait Gallery, was a combination of politics, scholarship, and artistic production, all areas which were charged with gendered conflict and contests during the period under consideration. Assembling the collection for the National Portrait Gallery was an opportunity for the Trustees to negotiate and produce an image of Englishness that was consistent with their own conception of the gendered nation; part of that process involved producing an image of the feminine which valorised and supported their claims to masculine achievement and value. The formal rules and informal practices which contributed to the formation of the Portrait Gallery's collection included, as part of that contribution, a gendered conception of the national. The Trustees drew on expertise forged through a wide variety of interests and work, some highly technical and detailed, and some involving rather sweeping conceptualisation. One form of work which was

was given the additional title of Director by the Treasury early in 1882, perhaps as consolation for his disappointment in the matter of a raise which he requested, and of which he was granted only a fraction, late in 1880; and when he retired in 1895 he was appointed a Trustee and awarded the K.C.B. Off work due to illness a month before he died, he wrote to the Trustees that he hoped to resume his work, which had been his 'one qualification and the mainspring of my existence' (minutes of the Trustees' meeting 21 March 1895, NPG, London). His life is thus far chronicled in the *Dictionary of National Biography*; and in a chapter of Susan Lasdun's *Victorians at Home* (London: Wedenfield and Nicholson, 1981). He was succeeded in his post by Lionel Cust, F.S.A, in 1895.

carried on in all these contexts was the work of negotiating and constructing gender roles for the men and women who were involved (or not) in them.

I. The Trustees and a 'national masculinity'

Sometime around April 1874, Benjamin Disraeli wrote to his friend Lord Ronald Gower, enquiring as to his interest in being appointed to the Board of the Portrait Gallery: 'alas I never see you - but I do not love you the less. There is a vacancy in the Trust of the National Portrait Gallery, over which Lord Stanhope presides. The duties of the Trustees are light, but they are most interesting and agreeable; and adapted to your Tastes. If you like, I will appoint you to the vacant post. You will find among your colleagues, some of the most eminent men in England.'⁸ The invitation to join the Trustees that Disraeli laid before Lord Gower offered the inducements of a convivial task performed with eminent colleagues. The self-congratulatory (Disraeli was himself a member of the Trustees) and flattering wording of this invitation points to one of the central features of the Portrait Gallery's nineteenth century Board: that it functioned in the context of a particular form of masculine sociability that characterised the lives of the (broadly defined) political classes.

The list of Trustees appointed to the Board during the nineteenth century which is appended to this thesis includes the period's most eminent politicians (Disraeli, Derby and Gladstone); some very prominent writers (Macaulay, Carlyle, Francis Palgrave, Leslie Stephen); Bishops (Mandell-Creighton, Wilberforce); artists (Leighton; Poynter; Millais); collectors (Richard Wallace, Charles Tennant) and miscellaneous other 'national' figures. Even the less familiar names on the list of Trustees made regular contributions to the 'national' enterprises administered by and through Parliament: these were men who sat in the Commons and Lords; on Parliamentary Commissions, Committees, and Investigations; and who held Trusteeships of the National Gallery or British Museum as well as the National Portrait Gallery (Earl Stanhope's record of public service is particularly

⁸Add. 59887 f. 26; undated, probably April 1874, Manuscripts Division, British Library, London. I would like to thank Allen Warren for drawing my attention to this reference. This letter is one of several quite personal letters in the correspondence of Disraeli and Lord Gower. Gower sculpted Disraeli's figure in the late 1870s, and presented the results to the NPG in 1882 (NPG 652).

complete). The Board was drawn from an existing group of the ambitious, metropolitan citizenry who had succeeded in their chosen fields, and who were already acquainted through their shared membership in parliamentary life, or scholarly work, or both. This was a world defined by gender, where full membership was granted exclusively to men; one way to characterise its participants is to describe them as participants in a patriarchal masculinity.⁹

The Trustees' community can be described as patriarchal because while it was not exclusively male, women's roles within its 'national' work were restricted to the ancillary entertainment, dining and conversation which took place outside official activities.¹⁰ A number of the Trustees' wives are obvious candidates for probable collateral participation in the National Portrait Gallery, although there is no record of any contribution they may have made: Lady Elizabeth Eastlake was a well known writer and critic on art, who played an important role in advancing her husband Charles' career; Lady Coutts-Lindsay was an artist and partner in the Grosvenor Gallery, she being the partner who put the Gallery on the social map and thereby sealed its success; and Margaret Carpenter was a portrait painter of some distinction who had a long and vigorous career.¹¹

⁹There is a burgeoning secondary literature on the varieties of nineteenth-century masculinity: Joseph A. Kestner, *Masculinities in Victorian Painting* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1995); Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989); David Roberts, 'The Paterfamilias of the Victorian Governing Classes,' in Anthony S. Wohl, ed., *The Victorian Family: Structure and Stresses* (London: Croom Helm, 1978): 59-81; Michael Roper and John Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); Jonathan Rutherford, *Forever England: Reflections on Race, Masculinity and Empire* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997); Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1995); Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: the ideal of Christian manliness in Victorian literature and religious thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

¹⁰K.D. Reynolds, 'Politics Without Feminism: The Victorian political hostess', in Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Wollstonecraft's Daughters. Womanhood in England and France, 1780-1920*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995): 94-108; see also Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season*, (London: Cresset Library, 1986).

¹¹On the Eastlakes see Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, *Journals and Correspondence of Lady Eastlake*, ed. Charles Eastlake Smith, 2 Vols., (London: John Murray, 1895) and Adele M. Ernststrom, 'Equally Lenders and Borrowers in Turn: The Working and Married Lives of the Eastlakes,' *Art History*, December 1992, 15(4):470-485. On Sir Coutts and Lady Lindsay see Davidoff, *The Best Circles*: 64; Susan P. Casteras and Colleen Denney, eds. *The Grosvenor Gallery: A Palace of Art in Victorian England*, (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996); Christopher Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996).

The Trustees' letters to one another occasionally end on an enquiry after the addressee's wife and family, and their 'business' letters were also sometimes used for arranging social visits that included female family members.¹² But the women were excluded from the formal positions and formal business of the Portrait Gallery, and most of its related enterprises.

The Trustees' careers suggest that most of them were active, ambitious and public-spirited. This is a kind of masculine identity which has been described by Catherine Hall and Leonore Davidoff as eminently middle-class, formed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by a bourgeoisie seeking to distinguish themselves as independent and achieving economic agents, particularly from the foppish aristocracy.¹³ It seems though, with respect at least to the Portrait Gallery's Trustees, to have been equally shared in by the printsellers, authors, rising politicians, and the hereditary and newly-made aristocrats. The Trustees were largely *gentlemen*, in a style then only slightly modified since the eighteenth century. Their activities have been most effectively described by Linda Colley in *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, who observes an emerging ethos of the male élite, one of national leadership by accomplishment and achievement.¹⁴ Accessible both to money and talent, this ethos of service could be usefully adopted by

1995). Margaret Carpenter's career and portrait is discussed in Chapter six, section V.

¹²See, for instance, the correspondence between Earl Stanhope and Benjamin Disraeli, or Earl Stanhope and Lord Derby, Stanhope MSS., U1590 C333/1-5 and C362/10 respectively, Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, Kent.

¹³Catherine Hall, 'Competing Masculinities: Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill and the Case of Governor Eyre,' *White, Male, Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992): 255-295; Leonore Davidoff "'Regarding Some Old Husband's Tales": Public and Private in Feminist History', *Worlds Between: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995): 227-276; and their influential jointly authored work, *Family Fortunes: Men and women of the English middle class, 1780-1850*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

¹⁴Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, (Yale 1991 reprinted London: Pimlico Press, 1992): 177-193. Vance notes the persistence of this masculine identity late into the nineteenth century in *The Sinews of the Spirit*: 24ff; Norma Clarke's 'Strenuous Idleness: Thomas Carlyle and the man of letters as hero', in Roper and Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions*: 25-43 gives a completely different account of the origin of similar views held by Thomas Carlyle, who was an influential Trustee of the Portrait Gallery. Late in the nineteenth-century history of the Portrait Gallery, the gentleman-artist becomes a useful touchstone, a figure most interestingly dealt with by Sussman in *Victorian Masculinities*: 73-172.

the rising bourgeoisie and aristocrats on the defensive alike.¹⁵ Attributing this identity to the Trustees may not accurately describe their private feelings or their work in other areas, but is consistent at least with their position in the Portrait Gallery as an all-male group charged with identifying the 'heroes' of national life.

I use the word heroes advisedly, for as Davidoff and Hall have convincingly argued, this particular sense of masculine achievement was constructed on the exclusion of 'others', here female others, from an equivalent sense of agency and purpose. Élite men identified themselves as independent through the identification of their dependents - women, children, men of a 'lower' class and peoples of other races - as less capable, or incapable, of comparable action, and hence dependent. The assertion of their dependency, or at least their difference, was enacted in various and sometimes contradictory ways, depending on the group or individual involved, but as feminists have long argued the demonstrations were linked, and interdependent.¹⁶ The collection of women's portraits that the Trustees developed for the National Portrait Gallery attends carefully to constructing this feminine difference from the independent male agent on a number of scores. Heroic women are few and far between, women being celebrated for their contributions to dynasty, morality, and polite accomplishment.¹⁷ In the National Portrait Gallery, women's portraits took on the qualities of dependence, intimacy, and domestic informality which the 'heroes' of English history had left behind.

The previous chapter observed that the founding of the Portrait Gallery was related to the desire to celebrate the national treasure

¹⁵To me this suggests that Dror Wahrmann's observations in *Imagining the Middle Class*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) that the 'middle-class' was primarily a rhetorical figure (rather than an empirical phenomenon) which emerged in the early decades of the nineteenth century is useful on at least one score: that of making it possible to imagine a vertical division in nineteenth century elite (including the nascent professional classes), one part of which coalesced around the moral conventions which are normally described as middle-class, but which had roots in later eighteenth century aristocratic and gentry society.

¹⁶See, for example, Catherine Hall, *White, Male, Middle Class* and 'Rethinking Imperial Histories: the Reform Act of 1867', *New Left Review*, December 1994, 208:3-29; Roper and John Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions*; Nancy Armstrong's 'The Occidental Alice', *Differences*, 1990, 2(2): 3-40 confidently and inventively handles the complex interactions between imperialism, gender and race during this period.

¹⁷See the conclusion of Chapter one for an example of one included (Grace Darling) and one excluded (Hannah Snell) female hero.

which was Westminster and the Parliament it housed; here I want to draw attention to the importance of the patriarchal masculine identity which those two institutions endorsed. First formally made masculine, in 1832, the male entitlement to parliamentary suffrage was subject to several refinements over the course of the nineteenth century. While the identity of free white male was claimed by most elite men of the nineteenth century, the exclusivity of that claim varied in its intransigence, and was intensified by debates over suffrage reform, particularly from the mid-1860s.¹⁸ To add to the affray, from the 1860s women along with some men began to raise their voices in a small but effective call for their own, at least limited, rights to suffrage, and hence posed a daunting challenge to the masculinity of national politics. The gendered attribution of parliamentary life was a significant contest during the period of this study, and one in which most of the Trustees had a personal stake.¹⁹

That stake was clearly defended in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery. Two works which represented parliamentary history were acquired early in the history of the Portrait Gallery, both of which can be read as assertions of a masculine parliament. As early as 1858 the Trustees decided to acquire George Hayter's *House of Commons 1833* (NPG 54, figure 9). A massive canvas roughly three by five metres, it represents the Parliament of 1833 which had been elected following the first significant (though its significance has become the subject of historical debate) franchise reform of the nineteenth century. The majority of its four hundred portraits represented men who were only very recently dead or were still alive, and three of those depicted were, at the time of acquisition, Trustees of the Portrait Gallery: the decision to accept the painting was the first instance of the Trustees transgressing their own rules

¹⁸See Anna Clark, 'Gender, class, and the nation: franchise reform in England, 1832-1928,' James Vernon, ed., *Rereading the constitution: New narratives in the political history of England's long nineteenth century*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996): 230-250; Keith McClelland, 'Rational and Respectable Man,' in Laura Frader and Sonya O. Rose, *Gender and Class in Modern Europe*, (London and Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996): 280-293; Catherine Hall, 'Rethinking Imperial Histories'.

¹⁹This by virtue of many of them having parliamentary seats, but others also took an interest in the matter: in a letter to her husband, Leighton petitioned Mary Watts to add her name (and solicit others) to an article to be published in the *Nineteenth Century* which opposed women's suffrage. Letter to G.F. Watts, 24 May 1889, M.S. 12744, Lord Leighton's Letters, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Libraries.

with respect to acquiring portraits of living sitters.²⁰ The early acquisition of this imposing piece affirmed the masculinisation of parliament as it was expressed by the 1832 Reform.

Toward the end of the century, the Trustees reaffirmed that masculinity, through the inclusion and exclusion of images of women in the collection of portraits which concerned parliamentary history. In 1895 the Portrait Gallery acquired what functions as a kind of companion portrait to the *House of Commons 1833*: this was Hayter's large-scale 1823 image of *The House of Lords, 1820, the Trial of Queen Caroline* (NPG 999, figure 10).²¹ Slightly smaller at over two by two and half metres, *The House of Lords* represents fewer than two hundred figures. As the title suggests, one of those figures is the benighted Caroline of Brunswick, consort of George IV, who appears to be giving testimony to the House of Lords with respect to the King's application to dissolve their marriage on the basis that she was an adulteress. The King's application raised the hackles of a surprisingly wide cross-section of the population, who were moved to denounce the King in press and petitions for failing in his duties to protect and provide for his wife. Queen Caroline's 'trial' has been identified by historians as a critical moment of public contest over the rights and responsibilities of men and women toward one another in marriage and society; as represented in Hayter's painting, the trial also figures their rights and responsibilities in national politics.

Queen Caroline sits centrally in Hayter's *House of Lords*, as a witness whose fate is being decided not by *her* peers, but by male peers. Her status as witness to rather than participant in her own 'trial', affirms the most conventional nineteenth century wisdom about the role of women in national politics: that they were best represented by their fathers, husbands, and brothers. The eligibility of the participant in national politics was in part established by his having his own personal constituency in the form of a household, one

²⁰Many of the sitters were not only still living, but some were members of the Portrait Gallery's Board of Trustees: namely, Stanhope, Macaulay, and the Marquess of Lansdowne.

²¹It was acquired on loan only from Lord Annaly in 1895. In 1912, one Lord Beauchamp arranged with Lord Annaly to lend the picture instead to decorate the 'royal gallery' in the House of Lords. This attempt to remove the picture from the Portrait Gallery met with considerable resistance from the Trustees, who subsequently purchased the painting from Lord Annaly with a grant from the National Art Collections Fund. See Registry documents for NPG 999, NPG, London.

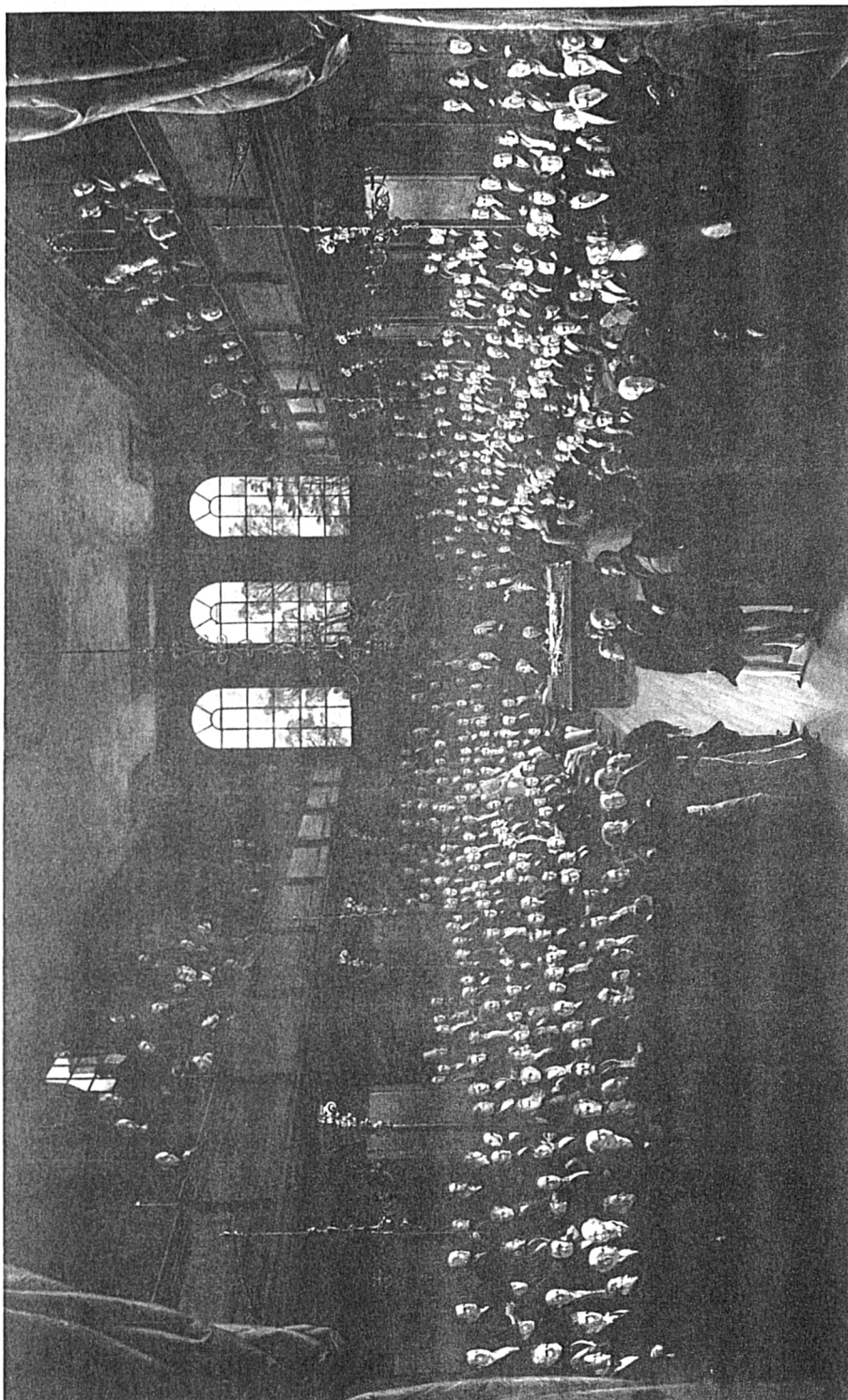


Figure 9. Sir George Hayter, *The House of Commons*, 1833
Canvas, 1833-43, 300.3 x 497.8, NPG 54

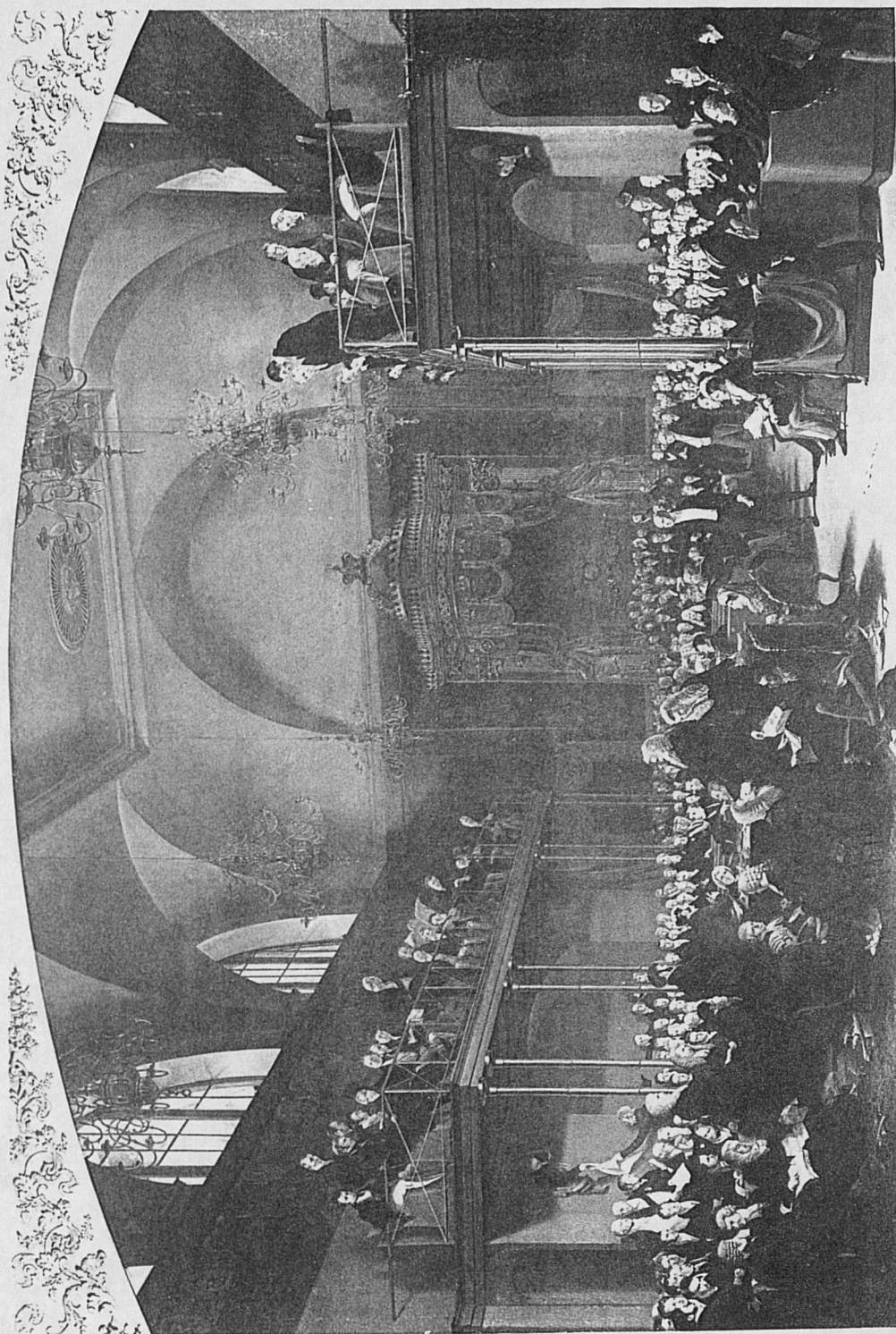


Figure 10. Sir George Hayter, *The House of Lords, 1820, The Trial of Queen Caroline*
Canvas, 1823, 233 x 266.2, NPG 999

which would normally include women. That voters and Members would represent the interests of their womenfolk was a defining feature of the masculinity of parliamentary life, particularly following the 1867 Reform Act, which for the first time enfranchised men on the basis of their status within a family rather than their property. Queen Caroline's presence in the House of Lords, seated, looking upward at her judges in the Gallery, a petitioner more than a Queen, images the masculine prerogative of Parliament in the most explicit way.

While explicit challenges to the masculine prerogative of Parliament were part of the political scene from the 1860s, they were not entertained in the National Portrait Gallery. When a portrait of Lydia Becker, notable activist for women's suffrage, was offered to the National Portrait Gallery in 1891, the Trustees declined to accept the donation. They recorded in their minutes that 'the question [of Miss Becker's portrait] must for the present be postponed' on account of her having been dead for less than ten years.²² What this in fact meant is that the acquisition did not receive the favourable vote of three-fourths of the Trustees required in the case of sitters recently dead, which hinted at the bequest's eventual fate; but the portrait was retained by the central committee of the Women's Suffrage Society 'pending the time when it can be offered to the National Portrait Gallery.'²³ When the portrait was offered again in January 1901, the Trustees formally declined the offer, recording that 'her services in the cause of Woman's Suffrage, Education, etc... were not in their opinion sufficient to enable them to accept a portrait of her for the National Portrait Gallery.'²⁴ This opinion was reconfirmed later in the year when they declined a different portrait of the same sitter as 'wholly unsuitable.'²⁵ It seems that an image which connoted women's direct challenge to the national masculinity as lived and re-presented by the Trustees in the National Portrait Gallery was unacceptable.

²²Minutes of Trustees' meeting 28 November 1891, NPG. Lydia Becker died on 18 July 1890.

²³*Dictionary of National Biography*.

²⁴Minutes of the Trustees' meeting 31 January 1901, NPG, London.

²⁵The offer was of a marble relief portrait by J.W. Swynnerton. Minutes of the Trustees' meeting 6 June 1901, NPG, London.

The national patriarchy was expressed not only in the Gallery's representation of parliamentary politics, but in many areas of 'national' life. Its precise configuration did not go entirely unchallenged and it did not go entirely unchanged: An important instance of this was the greater emphasis on developing the aesthetic aspect (narrative and figurative) of the collection during the Chairmanship of Viscount Hardinge, 1876 - 94, which is discussed more fully in section V below and can also be associated with the development of the portrait trade discussed in section II. These chops and changes tended to influence the precise configuration of what was made masculine and what feminine: what seems not to change is the attribution of a supporting role to women in the the National Portrait Gallery's representation of the epic of English history.

II: The commerce in portraiture

Whatever predispositions and ambitions motivated the Trustees in choosing sitters for the Portrait Gallery's collection, their choice was limited by portrait availability. Because the National Portrait collected only portraits of persons deceased (with the exception of the reigning monarch), and collected only portraits which were contemporary with the sitter, it could not and did not commission portraits of desirable sitters.²⁶ The collection was culled from portraits painted or carved during times past, which were subsequently preserved, and finally made available, by sale, gift or bequest, during the period under study. The potential acquisitions for the Portrait Gallery were therefore finite, but because that finity embraced hundreds of portraits in private possession as well those which were released into the marketplace the potential acquisitions can not (realistically) be catalogued.²⁷ The resale or 'secondhand'

²⁶A single, sneaky exception was made to this rule in the case of a portrait of the Portrait Gallery's employee George Scharf. His portrait by W.W. Ouless was commissioned by subscription of Scharf's friends in 1885, and 'presented' in 1886, when it was hung in the Portrait Gallery's offices.

²⁷In theory it would be possible to use the sales guides from auctions to catalogue the portraits which entered the formal marketplace, and the Portrait Gallery's record of offers to flesh out the the portraits which may have been available but not formally for sale. Since these sources seem frequently to wrongly identify the sitters (and painters) of portraits, such a catalogue would be most useful as an index of the *popularity* of certain sitters: an informal investigation suggests, for instance, that improbably large numbers of portraits of Queen Anne and Nell Gwyn were circulating in the later nineteenth century.

portrait market of the nineteenth century constitutes a vast topic, almost totally unrecorded, which is out of the scope of this study.²⁸ The Trustees' contact with it and implication in it deserves, however, at least to be sketched, since there is a clear relationship between the increasing institutionalisation and increasing masculinisation of the Portrait Gallery's administration.

The business end of the Portrait Gallery's collecting practices was characterised by it becoming more formalised and more masculinised through the course of the later-nineteenth century. Masculine specialization increasingly dominated the channels through which the Portrait Gallery acquired portraits, and worked to reinforce the masculinity of agency which had already been established by the Trustees in their management of the Gallery. The masculinisation of this form of commodity exchange waxes against the grain of the gendered history of commodification and consumer culture in the nineteenth century, which frequently records a feminisation of consumer culture.²⁹ The specialised consumption of the National Portrait Gallery was characterised by increasing concentration in the hands of (male) experts, a product mainly of changes to the kinds of transactions through which the Trustees' acquired portraits.

The Trustees mixed their strategies for acquisition, a necessity in the face of limited purchasing power. The Portrait Gallery was voted an annual grant by Parliament, usually around two thousand pounds, to cover the expenses of administration and preservation as well as acquisition.³⁰ By the end of the century the Trustees were

²⁸See Peter Cannon-Brookes, 'The London Art Market: 1882-1931', *Art, Commerce, Scholarship: A Window onto the Art World - Colnaghi 1760-1984*, ed. Donald Garstang, (London: P&D Colnaghi, 1984). Most studies of the art market for this period interest themselves in the commercial relationships between contemporary artists and collectors, for instance Robert Jensen's *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siecle Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) deals scantily with the London art market in the context of a study which is focussed mainly on France and Germany, or Diane Sachko Macleod's *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996) and Paula Gillett's *Worlds of Art: Painters in Victorian Society*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers U.P., 1990).

²⁹See, for example, Lori Ann Loeb, *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women*, (Oxford and New York: O.U.P., 1994) and for a sophisticated theoretical as well as historical approach, Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough, eds., *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, (London, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996).

³⁰From 1856 to 1859 (inclusive) the Portrait Gallery was voted 2000 pounds; until 1891 (the last year this information is recorded in *Hansard*), the sum

complaining that this was far too small an amount, but apart from such complaints the usefulness of that sum is hard to estimate.³¹ The price of portraits during the period varied wildly, depending on how the portrait was being sold, the collectability of the painter and the sitter, and the general state of the art market. The full length of Queen Anne (NPG 215) thought at the time of purchase to have been painted by Michael Dahl was acquired by the Gallery in 1866 for a mere twenty-one pounds; ten years later a full length of the Duchess of Devonshire by Gainsborough sold for more than ten thousand pounds.³² Many pictures that might have been out of the scope of the Portrait Gallery's budget (for instance, the smaller Reynolds of the Duchess of Devonshire as a child acquired in 1896) were acquired by donation, so that literal market prices did not apply. It was through a combination of strategies that the Portrait Gallery made its acquisitions from the portrait marketplace.

Early in the history of the Gallery the infrastructure of the portrait market in which the Gallery engaged seems to have been largely informal and undeveloped. Portraits were most often acquired from those offered (usually for sale) from the smaller collections of individuals that were developed either through personal interest or as a form of speculation: judging from the Trustees' correspondence, there were numerous small proprietorships of art and booksellers in London during the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Portraits of figures who lived in the nineteenth century often came from family and friends, the treasured reminders of dear relations who had lived within memory of the donors. Sometimes these were given as gifts or legacies from the individuals or families; many offers of portraits for sale, for small sums, were made by financially pressed legatees (frequently women, who sometimes had male friends and relations transact the business on their anonymous behalf). These

varied but was rarely lower than 1500 or greater than 2500 pounds. How much of each grant was designated for acquisitions is not specified. See *Hansard*, 3d series; until 1865, individual votes are indexed under 'supply', and after 1866 in the 'Summary of Supply' printed in the General Index to the Session; the Portrait Gallery appears with other national galleries and museums under Category IV of the Civil Service votes.

³¹Minutes of the Trustees' meeting 10 May 1879; see also the meeting of 14 March 1891 and 26 January 1895. By way of comparison, the total vote for the Portrait Gallery seems only to have been between ten and twenty percent of that granted the National Gallery.

³²Ben Macintyre, 'The Crook, the Tycoon and the Duchess', *Times Magazine*, 2 July 1994: 8-15.

modest offers were made and entertained frequently in the gallery's early decades.

The informality and small scale of this kind of market meant that women were often involved in these transactions.³³ Jane Nosedá sold to the Gallery a number of pictures which clearly came from a 'historical' collection of the type being developed by the Portrait Gallery.³⁴ Lady Eastlake, a renowned connoisseur, gave a bust of Sir Charles Eastlake and a Lawrence sketch of the author Lady Callcott. Lady Franklin gave nineteen portraits of the explorers who embarked on the Franklin expedition. Lady Paget, the wife of the Ambassador to Austria and a connoisseur of pictures, scored a remarkable diplomatic coup which resulted in the Portrait Gallery's acquisition of Hickel's painting, *William Pitt Addressing the House of Commons on the French Declaration of War, 1793* (NPG 745). The Trustees of the Portrait Gallery had expressed their interest in the painting to the foreign office, but Lady Paget was the only member of the mission who was willing to approach the Emperor on the subject. The donation is now attributed to the Emperor, but in fact, he gave the painting to her, and she presented it in his name.³⁵ Together with numerous single gifts and bequests made by women, these contributions affirm the significant role played by women in this one aspect of gallery building.

This informal market of small gifts and bequests was a source of acquisitions for the National Portrait Gallery throughout the period under study, and provided a significant number of portraits. The Portrait Gallery purchased only around half of its collection in the nineteenth century: the remainder were acquired through gifts and

³³On women as collectors in the nineteenth century see Ann Eatwell, 'Private pleasure public beneficence: Lady Charlotte Schreiber and ceramic collecting', Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Women in the Victorian Art World*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995): 125-148; and as collectors of family documents, Anne Higgonet 'Secluded Vision: Images of Feminine Experience in Nineteenth Century Europe', *Radical History Review* (1987) 38:16-36. Magdalena Braz Teixeira discusses women's possessions in relation to the history of (largely antique) collections in 'Portuguese Art Treasures, Medieval Women and Early Museum Collections', *Museums and the Making of Ourselves*, ed. Flora E.S. Kaplan, (London: Leicester University Press, 1994): 291-313.

³⁴These were NPG 626, 629 - 36, and 645, which was the eminent Lord Clarendon, purchased in 1881; these were primarily seventeenth-century statesmen and ecclesiastical figures.

³⁵The background to the gift is recorded in the minutes of the Trustees Meeting on 18 July 1885.

bequests from private individuals, sometimes from the Trustees. Forty-eight (or 35%) of the female portraits acquired during the nineteenth century were acquired by bequest. When considering a gift or bequest, the Trustees applied the same criteria as when they considered a purchase, and did not hesitate to refuse an offer if the picture did not suit. In sheer numbers alone, and in the importance of particular gifts (for instance the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, which was a gift and the founding acquisition of the collection), philanthropic exchange was an important element in the economy of the Portrait Gallery's acquisitions. But as the commercial end of the portrait market was increasingly institutionalised, and the economy of the Portrait Gallery became increasingly involved with the institutional exchange of portraits, women's gifts, bequests and small sales became less and less significant in the development of the collection.³⁶

The portrait market was, however, increasingly formalised, and the contact between the Gallery and owners of small collections was reduced through the intervention of specialist dealers. Apart from single bequests and donations usually made by the families of sitters, very few portraits were acquired from individuals because the market was increasingly cornered by the larger firms of dealers and auctioneers. The Settled Lands Act of 1882 brought a number of large private collections onto the market, and the sale of these pictures was normally handled by large firms: the businesses that the Portrait Gallery dealt with regularly were Henry Graves & Co.; Christie, Manson & Woods (now Christie's); Thomas Agnew and Sons; and Colnaghi's.³⁷ Christie's and Graves' had been acting as agents for the Portrait since its early years. Useful to begin with, they quickly became indispensable; by the final quarter of the century the effective disposal of the Portrait Gallery's small purchase budget depended fairly heavily on the co-operation of these businesses.

³⁶The decreasing significance of small acquisitions by bequest or purchase is suggested by the growing significance of purchases through commercial channels: portraits purchased by the NPG from companies, dealers, auction houses or in job lots from artists' estates constituted 38 or 19% of the first 200 portraits acquired (1856-65), and almost double, 68 or 34%, of the last 200 portraits collected during the nineteenth century (1896-99).

³⁷Cannon-Brookes, 'The London Art Market: 1882-1931': 39. See Geoffrey Agnew, *Agnew's 1817-1967*, (London: Bradbury Agnew Press, 1967) for an account of the expansion of that firm.

Evidence of the relationships between the Portrait Gallery and the large picture dealers suggests that even though the transactions were being made between substantial institutions, they were characterised by sociable co-operation. When the Gallery purchased portraits of Mary I and Mary Queen of Scots from Christie's in 1876, the *Times* noted that for a sale of 'works by all masters...they were sold for very insignificant prices';³⁸ this may indicate a degree of collaboration between the dealers and the Gallery in limiting competition for bids. The Portrait Gallery also became implicated with the larger businesses through debt. During the 1880s and 90s the Trustees sometimes commissioned substantial purchases from large collections that were put up for sale, purchases that often exceeded its annual grant. When the Treasury failed to advance the sum, the Portrait Gallery entered into credit arrangements with the auctioneer or with an agent. The Portrait Gallery several times purchased pictures and paid for them a year or more later; when Thomas Agnew of Agnew and sons sat as an M.P. he made his contribution to the national collection by arranging these loans to be had from the firm at no interest.³⁹ The larger firms of auctioneers and dealers attracted extra business from the Portrait Gallery by offering easy terms of credit.

Gifts to the Gallery were also increasingly a matter of exchanges between institutions. Transactions between the national galleries and museums were facilitated by the interweaving of personnel and their interests. In the 1860s, the South Kensington Museum purchased (under the guidance of a committee including William Smith) a print collection of national portraits, which may at that time have been intended in part as a reference collection for the National Portrait Gallery.⁴⁰ In 1866, 1867, and 1868 the South Kensington Museum

³⁸*Times*, 13 June 1876: 4.

³⁹The Trustees used all these strategies to buy pictures from the Wimpole collection. When the sale was first announced in 1880, the Trustees resolved at their meeting on the 20 July to get an advance from the Treasury; failing that, they would borrow from Christies (the vendors) at 5% per annum. The 2nd August meeting brought good news from the Treasury, but the sale had been postponed. When the sale did go ahead in 1888, Thomas Agnew agreed to have his firm bid on behalf of the Gallery, and to advance the purchase funds until the following fiscal year: see minutes of Trustees meeting 17 December 1888. Agnew's participation during the period that he sat as an MP is another instance of the role of parliament in forging the connections which enabled the collection. On 10 June 1886 he had written to the Trustees that his 'service for a public institution must be honorary and not a question of profit but of duty.' Trustees correspondence, NPG.

⁴⁰The minutes of the committee are preserved in the National Art Library.

sponsored and housed loan exhibitions of historical portraits which proved an important means of bringing to light the range of portraits in private possession, and were often referred to in the acquisition of paintings for the Portrait Gallery.⁴¹ Paintings were transferred from the British Museum to the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery, as were some from Barnard's Inn and the Society of Judges and Serjeants at Law.⁴² The National Gallery loaned the Portrait Gallery thirteen portraits in 1883, after an Act of Parliament enabled them to do so.⁴³ In some circumstances the individual galleries built in the nineteenth century might be viewed as elements of an expansive national collection.

The division of museum labour also produced flare-ups of institutional jealousy. In 1898 the National Gallery was given a portrait of Gladstone painted by Millais which the Portrait Gallery coveted. The Portrait Gallery lodged a complaint of poaching against the National Gallery with the Treasury Office, and were rewarded with a tart reminder that the Portrait Gallery's primary interest was in the person represented, and that many other portraits of Gladstone could be had.⁴⁴ This example of open hostility was an exception: most of these kinds of conflicts were amicably resolved through personal contact between administrators. That kind of contact was at least in part possible because the art dealers, the Trustees of the National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery, and other related institutions were connected through a masculinised world of public administration, and importantly, expertise in matters of art and commerce.

⁴¹The idea for the exhibition originated with Earl Derby, who wrote to Stanhope suggesting the exhibitions in February 1860 as 'a subsidiary Exhibition of National Portraits; limiting it to Persons unremarkable in themselves, of whom Portraits were by eminent Artists', Stanhope MSS, Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, Kent.

⁴²NPG accessions 525 through 591 were transferred to the NPG from the British Museum in 1879; Barnard's Inn contributed NPG 715-19 in 1884; Society of Judges and Serjeants-at-Law contributed NPG 456-84 in 1877; registry documents, NPG, London.

⁴³See minutes of the Trustees Meetings, 9 June 1883, and 17 November 1898 when further loans were made. Collections were regarded strictly as the possession of the institution, and the Treasury granted permission to the NPG to loan portraits only upon special request and for special exhibitions.

⁴⁴Feelings seem to have been aggravated by the donation having been made by Sir Charles Tennant, who resigned as a Trustee of the NPG in 1895. See the record of the submission to the Treasury in the minutes of the Trustees meeting, 19 May 1898, and the record of the reply recorded in the minutes of the Trustees meeting 7 July 1898, NPG, London.

III. Models of national significance

The National Portrait Gallery was initially intended to function not as a collection of artworks, but as a historical biography. It was understood that each portrait would invoke or explicate the character of an historically important individual, and that assembled in a gallery, the collection would function as a visual biography of the nation. Portraits were selected to embody and reflect the traits attributed of the sitter's life or character which contributed to her national significance, and the catalogues which were published as guides to the collection included short biographies that sketched those traits (and their relation to the portrait) in words.⁴⁵ The Portrait Gallery was an analogue of contemporary historiography, particularly in the popular form of the illustrated biographical collection, and these kinds of works were important resources for the Trustees. No less than nine of the Trustees - including Thomas Macaulay, Thomas Carlyle, Earl Stanhope, Francis Palgrave, William Hartpole Lecky, and Leslie Stephen (the first editor of the Dictionary of National Biography), were published historians and biographers, and intimately familiar with contemporary historiography. The gendering of the production and consumption of that contemporary historical literature had important consequences for the representation of women in the National Portrait Gallery.

One of the convenient results of drawing the Trustees and their collaborators from a few common cultures was the degree of unanimity it apparently produced about who would be represented, and how they would be represented, in the Gallery. The whole enterprise depended on the possibility of identifying who were the most significant characters in English history, and this was a process, the House of Commons pointed out, that was not entirely unproblematic. Earl Stanhope replied to the doubters that this could be effected in straightforward fashion: 'there ought not,' he suggested, 'to be in this collection a single portrait as to which a man [sic] of good education passing round and seeing the name in the catalogue would

⁴⁵The narrative structure of the Gallery is discussed in detail in Chapter one, section II. The way that portraits were read as transparent accounts of the sitter's character is discussed in section IV below.

be under the necessity of asking, "who is he" [sic]'.⁴⁶ If this now seems a recognisably unattainable ideal, it is a salutary reminder that at the time the Portrait Gallery was founded, it was founded on the premise that it would be possible to reach a consensus about who was historically significant.

Historians now draw on a wide array of objects which are constructed as historical agents, which might include individuals, groups of people organised by class or gender or other affiliation, or indeed even inanimate objects like geographies or 'discursive practices'. In the mid-nineteenth century the choice of historical agents was rather more limited, dominated in fact by what has been usefully described as 'methodological individualism'.⁴⁷ This describes a belief, most perfectly articulated in Portrait Gallery Trustee Thomas Carlyle's early work *On Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841), that the past is best understood through observing the actions of individuals, and best represented through description of significant historical actors and their lives. Biography was understood as the essence of history, and portraits were perceived by Carlyle and others to be its visual analogue. While this historical methodology had its models in classical historiography, it also had obvious resonance with the ideals of masculinity which were cultivated during the same period. 'Methodological individualism' was expressed in a variety of representational forms, including narrative history, portraiture and various formats of biography. All of these genres were referred to by the Trustees as indexes of historical significance in the process of acquiring portraits.

The use of these sources for the National Portrait Gallery's collection sometimes posed interesting problems in terms of establishing national significance. Existing collections of portraits and autobiographical records were essentially personal, and hence could be slightly haphazard by the terms of Stanhope's criteria of sitters being familiar to a man of good education. Elizabeth Hamilton, who features centrally in her brother's *Memoirs of the Comte de Grammont*, was the subject of the first female portrait acquired by

⁴⁶Sceptics included Mr. Roebuck who spoke up in the first NPG supply debate, *Hansard* 3d. Series, V. 142, c. 1119/20. Stanhope's remark is recorded in *Hansard* 3d Series, V. 140, c. 1778.

⁴⁷Christopher Parker, *The English Historical Tradition Since 1850*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1990): 14-18.

the Portrait Gallery, a choice which caused some critics to express doubt over the Trustees' ability to distinguish the nationally significant.⁴⁸ Such sources might include people whom the Trustees (or their critics) could not regard as nationally important, and may not have included individuals who were. The information contained in diverse sources of biography, loosely defined, had long since begun to be organised into what we might call secondary accounts in the form of biographical collections.

Printed works which assembled biographical accounts from varying sources, sometimes alongside a portrait image, had been produced as early as the eighteenth century. The pioneering volumes of this type, both regarded with reverence by the administrators of the Gallery were James Granger's *Biographical History of England* (1769) and Edmund Lodge's *Portraits of Illustrious Personages of Great Britain* (1821-34).⁴⁹ Designed as guides for collectors of historical portrait prints, these works included the biographies of significant historical characters with notations about their 'original' portraits and which of those had been engraved; when the biographies had been interleaved with engravings, the owner could consider herself possessed of a complete series of significant historical portraits.⁵⁰ The popularity of these studies encouraged the production of a whole raft of unillustrated (or less carefully illustrated) collective biographies which were published beginning around the mid-eighteenth century, a genre which continued to be popular well into the nineteenth century.

Collective biographers organised their subjects in various ways: Granger's three volumes and Lodge's twelve are arranged chronologically; but while Lodge's are organised by date of death, Granger's biographies are divided firstly by reign, and subsequently

⁴⁸*Hansard*, 3d series, V. 151: col. 1422.

⁴⁹The works of Granger and Lodge, which were reprinted throughout the course of the nineteenth century, were considered so important that they numbered among the historians whose portraits appear in the rondels which ornament the exterior of the 1896 Gallery.

⁵⁰Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth Century England*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press for the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1993), particularly 'Illustrious Heads': 53-78; David Alexander, 'The Portrait Engraving in Georgian England', *The British Face*, exhibition catalogue, (London: P & D Colnaghi Ltd., 1986): 26-28; and Roy Strong, *And When Did You Last See Your Father*, (n.p.: Thames and Hudson, 1978): 61.

divided according to rank. The majority of Granger's divisions refer to male ranks, leaving 'Ladies and others of the female sex' to appear as the eleventh of twelve classes. Other volumes took women as their sole subject. Collected in the Portrait Gallery's library were George Ballard's *Memoirs of Several Ladies* (1775); Matilda Betham's *Biographical Dictionary of Celebrated Women* (1804); John Burke's *Portrait Gallery of Distinguished Females* (1833); Anna Jameson's *Beauties of the Court of Charles II* (1838); Louisa Costello's *Memoirs of Eminent Englishwomen* (1844); and a complete set of the work of the Strickland sisters, *Lives of the Queens of Scotland and English Princesses* (1854); *Lives of the Queens of England* (1840-48); *Lives of the Tudor Princesses* (1868); as well as their *Lives of the Bachelor Kings* (1861).⁵¹ These works are too diverse to generalise much about their content, but they have at least in common a desire to memorialise the contribution of women to the history of England.

Women, as well as men, were thus considered appropriate subjects for biographical collections, and the ways that these collections were gendered resonates throughout nineteenth century literature and historiography, including the representation of women in the National Portrait Gallery. Gender shaped the construction of these volumes from the outset. Different qualities of writing (and reading) were often hung on sexual difference, and were understood and expressed through their gendered subject matter. Biographical histories were susceptible to appropriation for representing histories of women because of their status as a mixed genre: biographical histories combined historiography, a genre suitable for recording masculine heroics, with sentimentality which was expressed in the (feminine) domestic novel.⁵² But although the popularity and efficiency of the biographical history was based on a blending of gendered genre, gender distinctions were also preserved within the genre of biographical history.

The literary genderings of public (male) action and private (female) sentiment resonate throughout contemporary biographical collections, and the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery. One of the interesting features of the collections of female biography is that they

⁵¹Titles recorded in *Early Library Catalogues*, V. IV and V, NPG, London.

⁵²Mark Salber Phillips, "If Mrs Mure be not sorry for poor King Charles": History, the Novel, and the Sentimental Reader,' *History Workshop Journal*, Spring 1997, 43: 111-132.

often slip between the tasks of celebrating the lives of individual women, and using the lives of individual women to elaborate on the supposedly timeless (but definitely national) virtues of femininity.⁵³ H.G. Adams' *Cyclopaedia of Female Biography* (1869) claimed to consist of 'sketches of all women who have been distinguished by Great talents, strength of character, piety, benevolence, or moral virtue of any kind', a list of traits which would uncomfortably limit any cyclopaedia of male biography. These timeless feminine virtues could sometimes be constructed as aspects of good government, or civilised society, thus implicating the history of women in the history of the whole; Sydney Wilmot's *Queens of England* (1887) rendered this principle poetically by describing how 'a more complete and therefore more exact knowledge of a country is sometimes acquired by the humble pedestrian who saunters leisurely among its by-paths.'⁵⁴ The sentimental aspects of biographical history were then safely diverted to the by-paths of female categories like queens, beauties, and lady authors - the categories which shaped the Portrait Gallery's collection of female portraits.

These categories could also be read retrospectively into other kinds of portrait or biographical reference materials that were referred to by the Trustees in the process of selecting portraits. Existing portrait collections provided some of the most important models for the National Portrait Gallery, particularly those which might already be considered 'national'. Existing collections were useful to the Trustees in providing reference points for the national significance of sitters, but also for establishing the authenticity of portraits, a matter dealt with at more length in the next section. One important model collection of portraits was found in Westminster Abbey. Arthur Stanley, Dean of Westminster Abbey from 1864 and Trustee of the Portrait Gallery from 1866, is said to have found in Westminster

⁵³On 'feminised' history see Nicola J. Watson, 'Gloriana Victoriana: Victoria and the cultural memory of Elizabeth I', *Remaking Queen Victoria* 79-103 and Judith Rowbotham on 'History with a Purpose' in *Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction*, (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989): 146-178. The way that 'exceptional' women were used as metaphors for elaborations of the feminine is also discussed in Chapter three.

⁵⁴Sydney Wilmot, *The Queens of England*. (London: J.S. Virtue and Co., 1887): V. I, p. iii. The idea that the status of women worked as an index of 'civilisation' was commonly held during and after the Enlightenment: see Jane Rendall, 'Introduction', William Alexander *History of Women, from the Earliest Antiquity to the Present Time.....2 vols, 1781* (Bath: Thoemmes Press, 1994): v-xxvi, Kate Davies; 'Living Muses: The Politics of Embodiment 1750-1780', M.A., University of York, 1995.

Abbey, 'the material embodiment of his ideal of a comprehensive national church', although it was importantly also a series of family burial tombs.⁵⁵ He must have conveyed his enthusiasm for it to his colleagues, for in 1869 the Trustees began to commission electrotypes of some of the monuments for the Gallery.⁵⁶

The Royal collections at Hampton Court and Windsor, which had been catalogued and were open for public inspection during this period, were also used as paradigms for the Portrait Gallery's collection.⁵⁷ The Portrait Gallery's collection of beauties (see Chapter four) echoed the collections of beauties which were at each of the royal palaces. The historical significance of the women represented in these portraits and the biographies which could be attached to them were culled from autobiographical works which, like contemporary portraits, documented the individuals concerned at first hand. Anthony Hamilton's *Memoirs of the Comte de Grammont* (1714); Bishop Burnet's *History of His Own Time* (1724); and the Earl of Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion and the Civil Wars* (1702-04) were well-thumbed references.⁵⁸ Authors who wrote about the political and courtly intrigues of their own period were understood to have a special insight into the ranks of the 'nationally significant', and if the Portrait Gallery acquired a portrait mentioned in the work, or even another portrait of the same sitter, the reference was often cited. These kinds of historical references were integrated by the juxtaposition of biography and portrait into the nineteenth century convention of the illustrated biography: Anna Jameson's oft-reprinted account of *The Beauties of the Court of Charles II* (London: Henry Colburn, 1833) provided a useful example of how seventeenth-

⁵⁵*Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁵⁶This work must have been carried out with the Dean's permission and encouragement, and is one instance of the personal enthusiasms of the Trustees shaping the collection. The copies from Westminster Abbey include NPG 290 (1869); 291 (1869); 307 (1870); 330 (1871); 341 (1870); 331 (1871); 332 (1871); 345 (1872); 346 (1872); 347 (1872); 358 (1872); 359 (1872); 356 (1875).

⁵⁷See Anna Jameson, *A Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in And Near London*, (London: John Murray, 1842). Scharf bequeathed his interleaved and annotated copy of *Royal Picture Galleries*, among other volumes, to the National Portrait Gallery as evidence of his researches into other portrait collections; the list of his bequests to the library appears in the minutes of Trustees meeting 9 May 1895.

⁵⁸Dates are given for the first English language edition catalogued by the British Library. All of these texts were reprinted in various editions several times during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

century women and their portraits could be read within the terms of nineteenth-century historiographical accounts.

While the majority of the portraits studied in this thesis can be understood in relation to the feminine forms of biographical history, their influence on the Portrait Gallery's collection emerges particularly in the collection of women authors. The gendering of content in biographical histories was, as in other genres, extended to production: female biographical collections were often in the nineteenth century produced by women, drawing on and producing an association between female authorship and feminine subjects and literary forms. The Portrait Gallery referred to and valorized those associations in its collection of women authors, which is the subject of Chapter five. Like many of the female biographical collections, the collection of portraits of female authors gathered together a group of women whose images and biographies asserted the presence of 'feminine' writing which was associated with the social virtues.

Although it is clear that the Trustees referred frequently to these kinds of sources, because they were often polemical or haphazard with respect to the 'national' the inclusion of an individual in any of these models did not guarantee that the Trustees would regard them as historically significant. But the Trustees' reliance on autobiography, collective biography and portrait collections as models was very important in general for the representation of women in the National Portrait Gallery. The use of resources that were primarily family and life histories, such as portrait collections and biography, brought more women into the scope of national history than did what we now regard as paradigmatic nineteenth-century historiography. The conception of national history which the Portrait Gallery potentially embraced was considerably broader than a reading of (to take a pertinent example) Earl Stanhope's *History of England from 1710-1713* might suggest.

IV. Antiquarianism

One of the more important cauldrons in which the collection of the Portrait Gallery was forged was in antiquarian studies. Seventeen Trustees of the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery were Fellows of the London Society of Antiquaries, including the Board

Chairmen Earl Stanhope and Viscount Hardinge, as well as the Directors George Scharf and Lionel Cust; Gladstone visited the Society of Antiquaries meetings as a guest.⁵⁹ Five members of the Board were also „members of the Roxburghe Club, a kind of sociable antiquarian book club which was founded in 1812, and others would have pursued antiquarianism as aspects of their private study.⁶⁰ The London Society of Antiquaries, like the Roxburghe Club, are further examples of the almost exclusively male organisations in which specialist knowledges that were essential to the administration of the Portrait Gallery were exchanged and legitimated.

Antiquarian studies were crucial to the process of portrait collection in the nineteenth century. The rationale of the Portrait Gallery was to display genuine portraits of named sitters, an achievement which required some scholarly tools for the correct identification of the images. In some instances the Trustees acquired portraits which they knew had not been painted directly from the life; contemporary (but not modern) copies of portraits were fair game for the gallery in cases where an original was unlikely to come on the market at a price the Trustees could manage out of a relatively limited budget.⁶¹ But even contemporary copies needed to be comparable to an original or group of originals in order to be considered. As the Secretary of the Portrait Gallery expressed it, ‘unless implicit reliance can be placed on the authenticity of the *likeness*, a portrait becomes worthless.’⁶² When acquiring the portraits of near contemporaries, the Trustees would sometimes consult with family members over the effectiveness of a portrait’s representation; but this was not a strategy that could be applied to

⁵⁹Joan Evans, *History of the Society of Antiquaries*, (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1956): 280-290. Scharf contributed articles on portraits to their journal, and the Rev. A.P Stanley brought issues concerning Westminster Abbey for consultation to the meetings of the Antiquaries.

⁶⁰See Appendix 1, or the published *Chronological List of Members; Catalogue of Books; Rules and Regulations* (London: The Roxburghe Club, 1850). A description of the club’s activities can be found in Clive Bigham, Viscount Mersey, *The Roxburghe Club: Its History and its Members 1812-1927*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Roxburghe Club, 1928).

⁶¹An interesting and regular exception to the modern copies rule was made for statuary. Copies of statuary were regularly admitted, for instance the electrotyping of the Westminster memorials, see fn. 42 above. For a discussion of the perceived importance of the ‘authenticity’ of portraits see Chapter one, section II of this thesis.

⁶²George Scharf, *On Portraiture: Its Fallacies and Curiosities as Connected with English History*, M.S. copy of lecture delivered to the Royal Institution of Great Britain, March 2, 1866, NPG, London; my italics.

portraits of people long dead. The Society of Antiquaries offered one context in which strategies which could be used to authenticate portraits, and the resources to employ them, were discovered and developed.

The object of the Society of Antiquaries, and antiquarian study in general, was to advance not just historical knowledge, but expertise in identifying and dating historical objects.⁶³ Like other learned societies, the Society of Antiquaries offered its members space and materials for the specialist study of their subject, and opportunity to share information at regular meetings: the kinds of resources (social and material) and skills which were cultivated within the Society of Antiquaries were evidently very important to the work of the Trustees. The concern felt within the Antiquaries for historical authenticity was one which was extended to the Portrait Gallery, and was a major area of the Trustees' responsibility in selecting portraits. Its interests in this regard were still being cared for into the twentieth century by the 17th Viscount Dillon, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries from 1873 and Chair of the Trustees of the Portrait Gallery from 1908, who testified in court as an (or *the*) authority on ancient armour, swearing famously that 'my opinions are facts'.⁶⁴

George Scharf, Secretary, Keeper, Director, and finally Trustee of the National Portrait Gallery, was another Fellow who developed a reputation for opinions which were as reliable as facts. His particular area of interest was, of course, portraiture. He presented an antiquarian angle on the study of portraits at the Society's meeting of June 1876, when he discussed examples of portraits of Mary Tudor and Mary Queen of Scots, examples of each having been brought to the meeting.⁶⁵ Mary portraits were an especially thrilling subject for the portrait antiquarian. Inauthentic portraits, particularly of Mary

⁶³ This included, on its own account, portraiture. It was regarded as one of his major contributions to the Society that its member, National Portrait Gallery Trustee William Carpenter, had prevented a deception being perpetrated on the Antiquaries by the vendor of a portrait only purported to be that of Hugh Middleton. After Carpenter made his stand against the portrait, it was entered on the Society's minutes that at the meeting 'various observations were made on the literary and artistic frauds of the present time, and regret and expressed that no effectual means of checking or punishing such malpractices could be found.' *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, Second Series 4:250 (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1859).

⁶⁴ Quoted in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1931-1940.

⁶⁵ *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, Second Series (1876-78), V. 7: 49-66.

Queen of Scots, were rife, and the chronologically close grouping of the Marys made their portraits difficult to separate on evidence of style, particularly since the painters of that period were not then well-known. In his talk, Scharf reported in detail to his colleagues the antiquarian's strategies for authenticating the Mary portraits.

Scharf organized his discussion by sitter, sorting their various portraits into types. A portrait 'type' encompassed those that were taken during the same period or were contemporary copies of one original, although an original portrait is not usually identified. Each type is described through characteristics of pose, dress, and other formal features, and the various versions of each type were specified by owner and location. Authentic portrait types showed a consistency with other types in personal features attributed to the sitter, such as eye colour, distinctive facial features, or even 'countenance' or expression. It was at this stage that physiognomical discourses, which always were implied in the view of portraiture held by Carlyle and other early proponents of the Portrait Gallery, were applied openly: one purported portrait of Mary Queen of Scots was re-attributed by Scharf because its 'dark eyebrows, severe expression, and searching look do not accord with other portraits of the Queen.'⁶⁶ Thus a breadth of detailed knowledge of extant portraits, in Britain and Europe, and mostly in private collections, was deployed by the expert in identifying an authentic portrait.

In an age before photographic reproductions were used regularly for study reference, assembling this knowledge of portraiture required a staggering memory and/or ability to record (both of which were enjoyed by Scharf), and the opportunity and inclination for a lot of travel for the purpose of looking at pictures.⁶⁷ Collections of

⁶⁶*Proceedings*, Vol. 7: 57. This kind of assessment has an obvious relation to physiognomical discourses; this is addressed by Elizabeth Coutts in 'Between History and Art: the Foundation of the National Portrait Gallery', M.A., Birkbeck College, 1994; a contemporary work on the subject was penned by Thomas Woolnoth *Facts and Faces, or the Mutual Connexion Between Linear and Mental Portraiture Morally Considered and Pictorially Illustrated*. (London, 1852); for a sophisticated consideration of the discursive role of physiognomy during the period see Lucy Hartley, "The sign in the eye of what is known to the hand": visualising expression in Charles Bell's *Essays on Anatomy*, *Textual Practice*, 1996, 10(1): 83-121.

⁶⁷The Trustees began to receive and collect photographs of portraits for reference purposes only in the 1870s, and photographs of portraits offered to the Board were taken regularly beginning in the 1890s; barring the strange exception of photographs of drawings by Clouet of Mary Queen of Scots which

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family portraits, which sometimes included personal friends or individuals known only through books or by reputation, were a staple of the grander private residences of England as well as the palaces. Many of the Trustees possessed such collections themselves, and visited the homes of friends, relations, perhaps even relative strangers to see theirs. During his tenure at the National Portrait Gallery, Scharf regularly visited private homes to tour the picture collections (on the strength of introductions which may have been made in Society meetings), where he made sketches of the portraits that interested him. The Portrait Gallery Library included several *catalogues raisonnées* of the picture collections of private houses, to which were eventually added Scharf's copy of the catalogues from Woburn and his own edition of a catalogue of the pictures at Knowsley Hall.⁶⁸ The Trustees' knowledge of private collections - their own or their colleagues - was occasionally critical to their work: a portrait of Rachel Russell was reidentified as Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, by one of the Trustees who recognised her from a family portrait.⁶⁹

Once the images were gathered, a variety of other kinds of material evidence were brought in to authenticate portraits. In his discussion of the Mary portraits, Scharf detailed documentary evidence from a variety of sources, such as Princess Mary's Privy Purse Expenses (published in 1831), to confirm that a portrait was commissioned in the year noted on the painting. Picture catalogues made either in the nineteenth century or earlier were often referred to (particularly the catalogue of Charles I's picture collection) as were attributions made by eighteenth century scholars such as Edmund Lodge, James Granger and Horace Walpole. Images on coins and those reproduced in contemporary engravings of portraits were frequently referred to to verify portrait types. Portrait engravings were particularly significant aids to the study of portraiture, because they were dated and thus confirmed the age of the image engraved as well as the

were given to the Gallery by Scharf (NPG 814 & 815), photographs were not accepted into the main collection during the nineteenth century.

⁶⁸See George Scharf, *National Portrait Gallery: The Notebooks of Sir George Scharf (1820-95)*, (microfilm reprint London: World Microfilms Publications, 1978), and his *Catalogue of the Collection of Pictures at Knowsley Hall*, (London: n.p., 1875).

⁶⁹The portrait was identified as the Duchess of Cleveland by Viscount Dillon; Scharf wrote an account of the reidentification for the *Athanaeum* of 13 May 1893.

name of the sitter. In one case, Scharf cited the physical evidence of the picture itself: the royal brand on a panel portrait of Mary Queen of Scots 'materially increases the interest of the picture and completely establishes its trustworthiness.'⁷⁰ Corollary evidence was at least as significant in authenticating a portrait as the internal evidence of the portrait itself.

The antiquarian's strategies for authenticating portraits had an ideological as well as material impact on the collection of women's portraits for the National Portrait Gallery. The practice of authenticating portraits by reference to multiples or variations on portraits held in existing collections - collections which could only belong to wealthy families - meant that the national collection always referred back to the private collections of the nation's eminent (or once eminent) citizens.⁷¹ Like references to biographical collections, references to collections of family portraits often implied within them women's significance in a patriarchal family lineage, in their role as (re)producers of a family history.⁷² This influence is particularly felt in the collection of women from the royal family (Chapter three), wherein the continuity and legitimacy of the monarchy was celebrated; but this interest was also sometimes extended to non-reproductive (or at least extra-marital) sexuality, the interest of which recorded in the collection of beauties (Chapter four). Women's sexuality thus entered the purview of 'national importance', but if this interest expanded the range of portraits it was possible for the Gallery to collect, the portraits were selected to valorise the patriarchal conventions of female sexual behaviour.

Unless a portrait met the standards of authenticity that were developed within antiquarian studies, whether an 'original' or a contemporary multiple, it could not be admitted. It was these strategies which were used to determine whether a portrait represented a reliable likeness of the correctly named sitter, and thus fulfilled the conditions of the gallery. Together with related practices that verified the historical significance of the sitter, these constituted

⁷⁰Scharf, *On Portraiture*: 61.

⁷¹An instance, perhaps of what Linda Colley describes as the singular fact that 'only in Great Britain did it prove possible to float the idea that aristocratic property was in some magical and strictly intangible way *the people's property also*', *Britons*: 177.

⁷²The family as a model for nation, and women's sexuality therein, is discussed in the introduction.

what might be called an 'aesthetics of authenticity'. Such a term is necessary to describe the manner of appreciating a portrait for its origin in a particular time and place, an appreciation which stands in considerable contrast to a more familiar kind of aesthetics of artwork, which also played a part in the formation of the collection. The relationship and contrast between these two types of evaluation of portraits is one which had an influential role on the development of the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery.

V. *Connoisseurship*

The later nineteenth century witnessed a growing emphasis on the visual, rather than narrative or moral, pleasures of art, and this shift was registered in the expanding collection of the National Portrait Gallery. The collection of the Portrait Gallery has both an artistic and a historical significance, and these have always been held in tension within the institution; but it is a tension whose balance has shifted.⁷³ The aesthetic nature of portraiture was barely acknowledged at the time of the founding of the National Portrait Gallery; a portrait's appearance was perceived merely as one element of its historical and antiquarian evocation. The social, intellectual and political conditions under which the Portrait Gallery and this almost-strictly-antiquarian view of portraiture was founded began to collapse in the second half of the 1860s, resulting in a renewed interest in portraiture as an art object.⁷⁴ Where initially the appearance of a portrait was assessed as part of its iconography, as a narrative elaboration of the sitter's life and times, increasingly appearance was seen to be an end in itself in the collection. Appearance as a criteria for collection was never formally adopted by the National Portrait Gallery, but did begin to feature in the Trustees' selection of portraits.

⁷³Coutts, 'Between History and Art' frames the first twenty years of the Gallery's history in terms of this tension; a similar phenomenon is investigated by Ian Jenkins in *Archaeologists and Aesthetes: In the Sculpture Galleries of the British Museum, 1800-1939*. (London: British Museum Press, 1992). The most concise institutional documentation on the question in the Portrait Gallery is that titled 'Correspondence with Trustees on Admissibility of Portraits', which contains submissions from each of the members of the Board in 1931 on criteria for admission; a couple of the Trustees commented on the question of aesthetic versus semiotic functions of portraits.

⁷⁴See Chapter one, section II for a discussion of historicism in mid-century museums.

When the National Portrait Gallery was founded, the appreciation of the appearance\portraiture was subsumed in the appreciation of its documentary status. This was true of the study of all kinds of painting and sculpture: the study of art as an expression of historical place and period was widespread during the 1850s and persisted to a certain extent throughout the century. The practice of appreciating and assessing art as a historical phenomenon is identified in particular with Charles Eastlake, Trustee of the Portrait Gallery and Director of the National Gallery, but was widely endorsed.⁷⁵ The Special Commission on National Gallery of 1852/53 investigated the question of the historical substance of fine art, and much of the testimony reflected the the attitude that the antiquarian and the aesthetic appreciation of art were closely linked.⁷⁶ The production of art was, conversely, perceived to benefit from a certain amount of antiquarianism and historical study. This conviction was expressed in the appointment of an Antiquary to the Royal Academy (a post held by Portrait Gallery Chairman Earl Stanhope by 1855 to his death in 1875) to promote accuracy in historical subject painting, a trait which can sometimes be observed in the work of painters like Leighton and Poynter.⁷⁷ Portraiture was not unique amongst fine art in its susceptibility to appraisal for antiquarian or historical value.

All works of art were thus (and are thus) open to investigation as historical documents *and* as objects of aesthetic value. Although regarded principally as historical documents by the National Portrait Gallery, the portraits in the collection were also evaluated for the degree or kind of painterly or sculptural skill that they displayed. The antiquarian connoisseurship institutionalised in the 1850s frequently involved the assessment of painting's aesthetic character and mastery: painting was grouped into and assessed as a 'school', which referred to a group of work which could be characterised by certain stylistic traits. These traits were identified with the

⁷⁵Steegman, 'The 1850s: the New Connoisseurship' *Victorian Taste*, (London: Nelson's University Paperbacks, 1970): 233-256. See also Francis Haskell, *History and Its Images*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993) for an account of the historical development of these attitudes.

⁷⁶See for example the testimony of E. Hawkins, Keeper of Antiquities at the British Museum, *P.P. 1852-53, Report from the Select Committee on the National Gallery*, Vol. 35, Minutes of evidence, line 7746.

⁷⁷Patrick Conner, "'Wedding Archaeology to Art': Poynter's Israel in Egypt", in Sarah Macready and F.H. Thompson, *Influences in Victorian Art and Architecture*, Occasional Paper (N.S. VII), (London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1985): 112-120.

production of one geographical area usually during a limited period, and were frequently identified with one practitioner singled out as exemplary of his 'school'.⁷⁸ The notion of a 'school' thus also exerted a sense of national skill or achievement which the National Portrait Gallery was also designed to embody and promote.⁷⁹

Collectors and writers on art and artists (who were represented by several figures on the Portrait Gallery's Board) developed a canon of masters of the English 'school' of portraiture - a series of artists whose works were regarded as exemplary of national artistic accomplishment, including foreigners who worked in England.⁸⁰ No work has analysed nineteenth-century taste for historical portraiture, but a few names are recurrent favourites: Holbein and Master John were the Tudor era portraitists who impressed; Van Dyck was almost unfailingly hailed as the greatest master, but received some competition from Thomas Lawrence and Joshua Reynolds. The eminent (or at least most-employed) seventeenth century court painters, Godfrey Kneller and Sir Peter Lely, were considered too extravagant in their use of props, drapery, and suggestive expression, but were acknowledged as the premier portraitists of their period. Together with a few other of their peers, these painters formed the

⁷⁸See the work cited in fn. 74 above, and the Minutes of Evidence of the *Select Committee on the National Gallery*, P.P. 1852-53 V. 35, (28), where the geography or nationality of 'schools' is explicitly discussed on pp. 458/59 and 644.

⁷⁹Stanhope cited the encouragement of portrait painters in his speech to the House of Lords proposing the National Portrait Gallery; the ambition of the Gallery to commemorate national achievement might be read as an ambition to commemorate aesthetic as well as historical achievement. *Hansard*, 3d. Series, V. 140, cols. 1772 and 1780.

⁸⁰Many of the Trustees, and other figures related to the history of nineteenth century public gallery building, had notable private collections of historical paintings: these include Lord Lansdowne, the family of Lord Gower, and Sir Richard Wallace. Sir Charles Tennant's tastes as a collector were an exception in this group inasmuch as he preferred contemporary British painters, but his collection did include a number of portraits by the painters who would have been considered as part of the classical British school: see the *Catalogue of the Pictures Forming the collection of Sir Charles Tennant* (London: n.p., 1896), which gives an interesting insight into the construction of portraiture as a peculiarly British form. Sir Robert Peel, who initiated many of the early enterprises in public galleries, was also a notable collector. He died before the Portrait Gallery was founded; his son was appointed to the Board in 1887. Trustee William Carpenter published a memoir of Anthony Van Dyck in 1844; Director Lionel Cust published another in 1901. Lord Ronald Gower published a volume on *Romney and Lawrence* (1882) which formed part of the Illustrated Biographies of the Great Artists series; all the other subjects of this series were non-British. Gower also wrote separate works on Romney (1904); Reynolds (1902); and with Algernon Graves, on Lawrence (1900).

nucleus of a tradition of artistic production whose works set the standard for a connoisseurship of English historical portraiture. The taste for these painters waxed and waned with the kinds of connoisseurship which responded to their work, and more importantly for this thesis, whether the subject of the portrait was a woman or a man.

The shift in the balance between the connoisseurship of aesthetics and that of antiquarianism began in the second half of the 1860s. Francis Haskell describes how notions of beauty had always disturbed the historical or antiquarian interest in art, because beauty, or idealisation, was perceived to transcend the everyday; during the nineteenth century historical interest in art objects was increasingly directed at the prosaic or 'low' art forms which were apparently more strictly connected with the everyday life of the culture that produced them.⁸¹ Chapter one, section I suggests that in Britain, the interest and appreciation of 'ideal' beauty had been marginalised since the late-eighteenth century because of its association with Frenchness, both because of the idealism of French revolutionary politics (specifically contrasted with the 'naturalism' of English conservatism) and the neo-classical painting tradition (contrasted with the 'naturalism' of English painters, such as Constable). Interest in the prosaic, the specific, and the historical was celebrated as peculiarly English, and dominated the interpretation of portraiture and the National Portrait Gallery. The hierarchy that deferred the evaluation and appreciation of idealised, transcendent beauty in England began to break down during the 1860s, when idealisation was again accorded a legitimate place in English art and life.

Alison Smith has identified the 1860s as the period in which a generation of English artists who were to become the later nineteenth century's art establishment were exposed to and championed the role of idealism in art.⁸² One of the first official problematisations of the

⁸¹Haskell, 'The Deceptive Evidence of Art', *History and Its Images*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993): 363-388. Antiquarianism seems itself to have become a form of popular or amateur pursuit during the same period, a development which may have discouraged the Portrait Gallery's Trustees from investing their own professional credentials in it. See Stefan Muthesius, 'Why Do We Buy Old Furniture? Aspects of the Authentic Antique in Britain, 1870-1910', *Art History*, June 1988, 11(2): 231-254.

⁸²Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1996): 99-111. These included future Portrait Gallery Trustees Leighton, Watts and Poynter.

dichotomy of English/realism and French/idealism is recorded in the evidence given to the 1863 Commission on the Royal Academy. The evidence given by the painters Daniel Maclise and William Mulready acknowledges the relative absence of an ideal tradition in English art, and attributes a 'decline in standards' to the lack of antique and nude study that were the foundations of French academic training.⁸³ The distinctions between the English and French traditions of painting were literally made visible by the International Exhibitions of 1855, 1862 and 1867, when, Smith notes, the differences and desirabilities of the French and English national styles became a theme of the reviews of the picture exhibitions. The desirability of cultivating naturalism in painting was being called into question.

The relationship between the political connotations of idealism and realism, Frenchness and Englishness, also seems to have been reworked during the challenging decade of the 1860s. The role of idealisation in Englishness was being reworked within parliamentary politics as well as art criticism. The 1867 Reform Act, which concluded fifteen years of debate over electoral reform, introduced apparently abstract concepts of citizenship to national politics: after 1867 an English political ideal was being promulgated at least on the Liberal side.⁸⁴ At the same time, the intensity of the relations between the political and the artistic life of the nation was being discharged. Parliamentary enquiry into the arts peaked in the 1850s and 1860s, and direction of the galleries and schools was increasingly left in the hands of a burgeoning artistic and administrative profession. Their interests were less explicitly involved with the protection of a political order, and more inclined to securing a professional order. This general trend also manifested itself within appointments to the Board of Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery.

Until the late 1860s, the Board of the National Portrait Gallery was largely appointed from the community of men who had

⁸³*Report from the Commissioners on the Present Position of the Royal Academy in Relation to the Fine Arts*, P.P. 1863 V. 26, (3205).

⁸⁴Francis H. Herrick, 'The Second Reform Movement in Britain 1850-1865', *the Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1948, V. 9(2): 174-192 renders the implications of the 1867 reform explicitly in terms of the 'ideal' versus the phenomenal; current work on the Reform Act (see footnote 13 above) specifies that ideal as an ideal of masculinity, but one which was released from the specific forms of property ownership which had previously anchored it.

parliamentary seats and interests in literary, historical, or ecclesiastical enterprises; artists were little represented. There were two early appointments to the Board from the art establishment, in the persons of Charles Eastlake and Francis Grant. Their role in the Board appears to have been functionary at best: the aesthetic appraisal of portraits being considered for acquisition was at least formally excluded from administrative concerns, and no discussions of the artistic merit of portraits appear in the institutional records of the early history of the Gallery. The repression of aesthetic interests within the Board evidently caused Sir Francis Grant, President of the Royal Academy, to lose interest in the Gallery; he and another member of the Trustees who was dissatisfied with the Gallery's lack of connoisseurial interests were removed from the Board in 1867 after failing to attend a meeting in two years.⁸⁵ Three consecutive appointments of 1866 and 1868 added men who began to change the culture that emphasised the antiquarian or historical over the aesthetic interest of portraits: they were Alexander Beresford-Hope; Sir Coutts Lindsay; and the second Viscount Hardinge.

The appointment of these three men marks the beginning of the incorporation of the aesthetic values of portraiture into the National Portrait Gallery. What is interesting about these appointments, and the values they would ultimately bring to the National Portrait Gallery, is the somewhat different form of public service that these men represent. Unlike most of their fellow Trustees, none of these men were strictly part of the political establishment: Beresford-Hope held a Conservative seat in the commons for many years but participated mainly in questions about the church and those of an artistic nature; neither Hardinge nor Lindsay seriously entered politics. And although none of them were professional practitioners, all of them had artistic interests which shaped their activities and identities in ways which aped, and sometimes bordered on, professionalism.⁸⁶ Together with Trustees appointed later in the

⁸⁵This was Lord Elcho, whose dissatisfaction with the arrangements was communicated by fellow Trustee William Smith privately to the Board Secretary, George Scharf, in 1863. Elcho, along with Francis Grant, was removed from the Board in 1867.

⁸⁶Although he never practiced architecture, Beresford-Hope held the Presidency of the Royal Institute of British Architects at the time of his appointment to the Portrait Gallery's Board. He was an active advocate of the Gothic in Parliamentary debate: see M.H. Port, *Imperial London: Civil Government Building in London 1850-1915*, (New Haven & London: Yale U.P. for Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1995); or his obituary in *The Facing Femininities*: Chapter two

century who *were* professional artists, these men openly introduced the values of beauty and aesthetic merit into the collection of the National Portrait Gallery.⁸⁷

Evidence of the existence of the aesthetic gaze amongst the board only begins to be explicitly recorded during the Chairmanship of Viscount Hardinge, who took over the Chair on the death of Earl Stanhope in 1876. One senses that aesthetic evaluation was regarded as a specialist skill within the board, and that if there were certain board members whose function continued to be the assessment of the historical significance of sitters, there were others whose appointments reflected their ability to pronounce on the aesthetic merits of potential acquisitions. It was explicitly for this reason that during Hardinge's chairmanship that the President of the Royal Academy (PRA) was appointed *ex officio* to the Portrait Gallery Board; Frederic Leighton proved a particularly active member, who sometimes delivered written assessments of pictures to meetings when he could not attend in person.⁸⁸ It was also during Hardinge's tenure as chair that practicing artists in addition to the PRA began to be appointed: these included John Everett Millais in 1882 and G.F. Watts in 1896. The influence of this specialist group of Trustees was increasingly felt in the gallery.

Although the historical authenticity of portraiture continued to be the main criteria for acquisition, from 1876 there are numerous

Journal of Proceedings of the Royal Institute of British Architects, March 1889, N.S. 4 (11): 203-05 and 219-20. On Coutts Lindsay see Casteras and Denney, eds. *The Grosvenor Gallery*; Newall, *The Grosvenor Gallery Exhibitions*; or Virginia Surtees, *Coutts-Lindsay 1824-1913*, (Wilby: Michael Russell, 1993); Viscount Hardinge's drawings of India, lithographed by J.D. Harding, were published as *Recollections of India* (London: Thomas McLean, 1847); four of his landscape watercolours are held by the South London Gallery (acc. 511-13 and 516).

⁸⁷Elisabeth Prettejohn links the development of a language of aesthetic appreciation within art criticism to the professionalisation of the field in 'Aesthetic Value and the Professionalization of Victorian Art Criticism 1837-78', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Spring 1997 2(1): 71-94. The increasing acceptance of these values within the Portrait Gallery and its Board can also be seen as a consequence of the professional painter growing closer in status to the gentleman. See Paula Gillett, *Worlds of Art: Painters in Victorian Society*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers U.P., 1990): 18-68. Further discussion of the Trustees 'professional' practices its relation to gender and social status and the National Portrait Gallery appears in Chapter six, section III; Chapter four, section III also deals with gender and art practice in the later nineteenth century.

⁸⁸In a letter to Scharf dated 7 February 1879 Hardinge expressed his wish to have Frederic Leighton appointed to the Board to act as an authority on 'artistic merit'. Trustees correspondence, NPG, London.

events in the administrative history of the National Portrait Gallery which record the importance of the aesthetic view of portraiture to the institution. These include a rehang of the South Kensington Galleries in 1879, which preserved the chronological order to the museum visit but placed some of the 'choicest and most interesting pictures' purchased by the Trustees in a prominent position; the informal introduction of 'artistic merit', which was specifically contrasted with a portrait's merit as a likeness, as a criteria for acquisition; and complaints to the Treasury that the management of their purchase grants, which had to be spent annually, was 'a direct inducement to the purchase of *inferior* pictures.'⁸⁹ Open assessments of the artistic merit of portraits and unbridled pursuit of portraits by 'masters' are frequent in the records of the Portrait Gallery by the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

Women's portraits, in which notions of the beautiful were doubled (sitter *and* portrait), became an important site for the negotiation of the tension between the aesthetic and the documentary value of portraiture. This was part of the broader context of art practice and appreciation in which the relation between women, beauty, and aesthetic production was reconceived, and female beauty emerged as a central trope in representation and in the construction of the gendered identity of the artist.⁹⁰ Closely tied to issues of (masculine) professionalisation, the Trustees - some of the most influential of whom were practising artists - were personally implicated in these

⁸⁹Minutes of the Trustees' meeting 10 May 1879; see also the meeting of 14 March 1891. The rules of the Trustees were never altered to include this criteria, but there were several instances where it was openly applied: see, for instance, the minutes of the Trustees' meeting of 27 October 1881, where a portrait of George Eliot was declined because the Trustees 'considered the style and merits of the painting inadequate to the subject'. On 4 June 1887 the Trustees recorded in their minutes that they accepted a portrait due to being 'impressed with its high merit as a work of art'; they even waived the rule that a sitter must be ten years dead in order to accept the portrait of Lord Cardwell by George Richmond (NPG 767). Minutes of the Trustees' meeting, 23 February 1893; *my italics*. Further complaints about the Treasury's meanness preventing the Gallery's purchase of important work were recorded on 26 January 1899; the Treasury replied on 8 June of that year, reminding the Board that they were in the business of collecting sitters, not artists.

⁹⁰An excellent discussion can be found in Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'In Venus' Train', *Problem Pictures: Women and Men in Victorian Painting*, (Aldershot: Scolar, 1995): 139-158; Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock, 'Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature: A Study of the Representation of Elizabeth Siddall', *Art History*, June 1984, 7(2): 206-227; and Marcia Pointon, 'Reading the body: historiography and the case of the female nude', in *Naked Authority: The Body in Western Painting 1830-1908*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 11-34.

changes, and the influence of these problems in the history of the Gallery was felt both administratively and within the collection.⁹¹

These issues register in complex but definite ways in the collection of women's portraits. The Trustees' collaboration with the gendering of literary forms was extended to a gendering of portrait aesthetics, and the association of certain visual conventions with different varieties of female behaviour is evident particularly in the collection of portraits of beauties, the subject of Chapter four, and those of authors, considered in Chapter five. The problematic relationships that were incurred by the triangulation of beauty and femininity, beauty as a quality of the artwork, and the (masculine) gender of the artist are most interesting in the collection of women artists' portraits, discussed in Chapter six, where the conflicts between the Trustees' ideals of portraiture and ideals of femininity are most evident.

V. Conclusion: the coupling of women's portraits

If the rules for the acquisition of women's portraits did not differ explicitly from the rules for the acquisition of men's portraits, it is clear that the Portrait Gallery's implicit (and perhaps more significant) criteria for acquisition were informed by gender. Although the National Portrait Gallery's first rule for acquisition was that a portrait represent a person who was important to the 'civil, ecclesiastical, or literary history of the country', there were several instances where women's portraits were acquired not because the sitter had obviously and individually made such a contribution, but because the portrait was offered as a companion to the portraits of their husbands or fathers.⁹² This was arguably the case with the portrait of Jane Hood (née Reynolds) purchased with that of her husband in 1891 (NPG 856); that of Anne Flaxman (NPG 674) which was given, and framed with her husband's portrait, in 1883; that of Elizabeth Claypole, daughter of Oliver Cromwell (NPG 952) and perhaps Jane Griffin, Lady Franklin (NPG 904), whose portrait was acquired in 1892 along with the portrait of her explorer husband and

⁹¹See Chapter one, section IV.

⁹²Women were also included in a few group portraits of families which were acquired by the NPG during the period under study: see for example NPG 1106, Adam Walker and his family.

those of other members of his famous Arctic expedition.⁹³ While each of these was certainly a 'remarkable woman' in her own right (as Anne Flaxman was described by the donor of her portrait), it is improbable that any of their portraits would have been acquired independently of those of their husbands.⁹⁴

The rule of historical importance, although strenuously enforced, accommodated the acquisition of women's portraits as companions to the portraits of men. This kind of affirmation of women's role in the 'national' corresponds to, and reconstructs, the structures of gender which shaped the arenas of the 'national' in which the Portrait Gallery's Board Trustees participated. No woman was appointed to a position of consequence within the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery.⁹⁵ Some portraits made by women were collected, but women artists were not granted the professional status (i.e. membership of the Royal Academy) that might have qualified their work as nationally consequent or qualified them for a place on the Trustees.⁹⁶ Women had long been writing historical works, but were more and more excluded from the society of professionals as historiography was institutionalised in the universities, when women

⁹³Jane Franklin was a traveller in her own right and her portrait may have been regarded as more than a companion piece to her husband's. The pair of portraits exhibit, however, a character which seems designed to emphasise their sitters' gender roles rather than their other accomplishments: Jane was represented by a small chalk oval by a woman artist, an image which contrasts decidedly with Sir John's larger, darker oil portrait. The gendered relationship between these two images is similar to the gendering of portraits of contemporary authors discussed in Chapter five, section III.

⁹⁴For this description of Anne Flaxman see the letter from donor Theodore Martin to George Scharf, 20 April 1883, National Portrait Gallery, London. John Flaxman's household included his sister Mary Ann, also an artist, whose portrait (NPG 1715) was acquired in 1913.

⁹⁵A female housekeeper and a female attendant were employed by the National Portrait Gallery. On 29 January 1887 Viscount Hardinge, the second chairman, wrote to the Secretary and Director Scharf advising him that women were much better servants. Scharf seems to have approached the Society for the Promotion of the Employment of Women with a suggestion that women might be employed to paint the labels for the pictures. By the time the Society had found a workers whose skills were found to suit, the job had been contracted elsewhere. See letters from Gertrude King of S.P.E.W. to Scharf, 9 February 1875 & 15 June 1876, and his replies; all letters in Trustees correspondence, NPG, London.

⁹⁶See Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Women in the Victorian Art World*, (Manchester: MUP, 1995); Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993); and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, *Victorian Women Artists*, (London: The Women's Press, 1987).

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were struggling even to be admitted as students.⁹⁷ The Society of Antiquaries reluctantly began to admit women only after the Disqualifications of Sex Bill was passed in 1919, although several women published in their journal during the nineteenth century.⁹⁸ The persons, activities and epistemologies which worked together in the formation of the National Portrait Gallery brought historically specific conventions of female roles with them, conventions according to which the Portrait Gallery's 'national' history of women was constructed.

Models for the acquisition of women's portraits are familiar as the feminine virtues of the private sphere, the domestic if not specifically familial roles assigned to English women of the period. The reason that those models are so familiar is that although feminine roles were articulated through the vocabulary of domestic life, they were ascribed with public value. We now understand that opposing the public and private is an unsustainable practice, although it has been a dominant ordering paradigm in nineteenth-century historiography (and history).⁹⁹ The National Portrait Gallery was one arena where the privacy of femininity was opened to public view, and feminine virtues were explicitly staged as nationally, and publicly, significant. Anne McClintock observes that 'a woman's *political* relation to the nation was submerged as a *social* relation to a man through marriage';¹⁰⁰ but in the Portrait Gallery it was raised to the surface, reasonably plain to see.

The inclusion of women as partners and companions to historically significant men suggests a general, or at least effective, intention to affirm women's importance as helpmeet rather than instigator of 'national' activity, a recognition which simultaneously endowed male

⁹⁷On the subject of women in the historical profession in the nineteenth century see Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and Bonnie G. Smith, 'The Contribution of Women to Modern Historiography in Great Britain, France and the United States, 1750-1940', *American Historical Review*, 1984, 89: 709-732.

⁹⁸Evans, *History of the Society of Antiquaries*: 387-89.

⁹⁹See for instance Carole Pateman, 'Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy', in *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989): 118-140 and Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, eds., *Feminists Theorize the Political* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁰⁰Anne McClintock, 'Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family', *Feminist Review*, Summer 1993: 65.

biography and history with a note of *paterfamilias*. This coupled intention can be detected in the majority of the collection of women's portraits, in which the primary themes were sexuality (stressing the desirability of legitimate reproduction), and women's accomplishment as contextualised by moral, social, and domestic life. The development of these themes in the collection of women's portraits simultaneously delineated certain areas for women's contribution to the 'national', and preserved a masculine identity which was consistent with the patriarchal masculinity of the Trustees and their peers.

The following three chapters assess the portraits of women collected by the nineteenth-century Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery for the ways that they produced a female version of the 'national' which complemented and supported the 'national masculinity' which characterised the enthusiasms of the Trustees. Starting from the general criteria for acquisition described here, each chapter investigates the ideals of femininity which were used as an additional criteria to determine which portraits were selected, and some that were rejected, for display in the National Portrait Gallery. The chapters are organised in categories of national accomplishment like those recognised in the rules for acquisition, altered to describe the biographical categories in which women's portraits were collected: queens and royal women; beauties; and authors. Together, these portraits worked to narrate a history of women in the nation which culminated in a characteristically nineteenth-century feminine ideal.

CHAPTER THREE

QUEENS AND CONTINUITY

Very nearly half of the women's portraits collected by the National Portrait Gallery in the nineteenth century represent queens regnant, queens consort, princesses, and duchesses who played a significant role in the succession of the English monarchy from the time of the Norman Conquest.¹ In the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery (and arguably today) national history was figured through the royal dynasty, making the continuity of the nation identical with the continuity of the royal family: at South Kensington, the hang of the collection was ordered by chronological sequence according to *reign*. More than any other aspect of the collection, the portraits of queens (and kings) expressed the conception of the Gallery as a national history. The function of images of the royal family in the collection was an important (and possibly innovative) presentation of the royal family as national exemplars, but this solution to the representation of the nation also introduced tensions into the National Portrait Gallery's collection of royal women: the ways that the collection negotiated the problem of representing queens as exceptional (rulers) and as exemplary (women) is the main theme of this chapter.

The Portrait Gallery's collection of queens and royal women (listed in Appendix 2-B) had to dignify and explicate its subjects' extraordinary status. The recognition of royal status was partly achieved through hanging portraits of queens in positions which acknowledged their position at the head of court, but their extraordinariness was also legible in the nature of their portrait images. The royal portraits collected by the Portrait Gallery made a show of sartorial extravagance, a ritual element in the theatre of monarchy and a recognised indicator of social status particularly for women. As well as linking the images of queens with the actual practices of investiture, the sartorially elaborate representation of royal women created (or simply exploited) a logic out of the historical conjunction during the Tudor era of the most powerful queens and the most lavish portrait painting. Prominently decorative dress was mainly reserved in the Portrait Gallery's collection for queens, and its presence in the portraits of royal women distinguished them from the portraits of other women in the collection. Section I explores the

¹Dated from the Conquest because it constitutes the watershed date for the founding of an English monarchy, and because identifiable portraits cannot be said to exist before; the relevance of this is discussed in Chapter one, section II.

significance and appearance of luxurious adornment in the collection of the Portrait Gallery.

While queens and royal women were represented in the Portrait Gallery in ways which acknowledged their special status, the structuring of the collection's narrative around the generations of the royal family meant that portraits of royal women also had to indicate the more familiar roles occupied by women in a (patriarchal) dynasty. While some portraits of royal women in the collection present exalted images of their sitters, others represent royal women in ways that evoke their lives as wives, mothers, and daughters. The representation of royal women in familiar roles structured the Portrait Gallery's narrative of English history as a dynasty. This dynasty's continuity was secured by its distaff side: figuring the procreative sexuality of royal women closed the gaps in the paternal succession of the royal family, and constituted the English monarchy as a continuous feature of 'national' life. As well as inscribing the continuity of dynasty, the representation of royal women with portrait images that overtly or implicitly figured them as childbearers inserted female royals into recognisably feminine roles, and arguably served to grant queens the power to serve as models of feminine behaviour for the 'nation'.

The final section of the chapter investigates the twinned themes of femininity and luxury in portraits of Queen Victoria which were acquired by the National Portrait Gallery during the nineteenth century. The culminating image of the collection, the expectation of Victoria's portraiture was that it should simultaneously exemplify modern feminine virtues, and identify her as the exceptional inheritor of a continuous tradition of monarchy.² The strength of that expectation is revealed by the efforts of the Trustees to acquire an image which satisfied both conditions, efforts which were made with delicacy, but tenacity. Queen Victoria was the only sitter who was

²Margaret Homans surveys the construction of Victoria's maternal image in 'To the Queen's Private Apartments: Royal Family Portraiture and the Construction of Victoria's Sovereign Obedience', *Victorian Studies*, 1993, 37(1): 1-41; see also Ira B. Nadel, 'Portraits of the Queen', *Victorian Poetry*, 1987, 25(3/4):169-191. Simon Schama's 'The Domestication of Majesty: Royal Family Portraiture, 1500-1850', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Summer 1986, 17(1): 155-183 periodises the process of the familiarisation of Royalty internationally and over centuries, which provides a useful context for this discussion but willfully neglects the peculiar local circumstances of Victoria's imagery.

allowed to be represented in the collection during her lifetime, and in the unique position of being able to select her own portrait for the Gallery. Her gift was not presented until the relatively late date of 1883, and was not the authoritatively regal portrait the Trustees seemed to have hoped for; they subsequently arranged to hang a portrait which more effectively united the symbols and themes of feminine monarchy as they were expressed in the Portrait Gallery's existing collection of historic royal women's portraits.

Structuring the representation of queens past and present within contemporary languages of femininity has been interpreted as an important part of the ideological work of legitimating the monarchy during the nineteenth century; it was also arguably an important way of constructing a concept of nation which would appeal, and be available to, a broad population.³ The obvious feminisation of royal women might have rubbed against the grain of their exceptional status, but the resulting tensions were negotiated with important consequences: combining familiar tropes for imaging female life with 'traditional' symbols of authority linked the monarchy's past to Britain's present, benefactor with beneficiary. The collection of queens was made to represent models of exemplary femininity which were endowed with national, and ahistorical, legitimacy. The portraits of royal women constituted the backbone of the Portrait Gallery's narrative, and a set a transhistorical standard for a national femininity.

³Jo Burr Margadant's 'The Duchesse de Berry and Royalist Political Culture in Postrevolutionary France,' *History Workshop Journal*, Spring 1997, 43: 23-52 argues 'that the Bourbons acquired support by promoting their status as a family. Elizabeth Langland explores the question in 'Nation and nationality: Queen Victoria in the developing narrative of Englishness' in Margaret Homans and Adrienne Munich, eds., *Remaking Queen Victoria*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1997): 13-32, but suggests Victoria's maternal role was at odds with her national one. In *Queen Victoria: Gender and Power*, (London: Virago, 1990) Dorothy Thompson observes that the most striking change in the conduct of the Royal family after Victoria's accession was 'in sexual, marital and family behaviour generally' (15), which identifies the tone of 'national' life during the period. David Cannadine's 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c. 1820-1977' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1983, 1994 rpt.): 101-164, cites a number of reasons why the monarchy gained popularity and importance after 1870, most of which imply that the monarchy was being made significant to a mass population which was increasingly being implicated in the nation. Together, these researches might suggest that the monarchy was being reconceived as a familial mould for the wider nation. The mechanics of this are elaborated in section II below.

I. Varieties of monarchy: signifying the body of the queen in the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery

Though heirs are born, kings and queens are not. One of the challenges of constructing a collection of portraits of English notables that recognised the exemplary and unique status of the monarch (an ambition consistent with the Portrait Gallery's status as an official organ of state) was the visual expression of that principle. The portraits of royal women include some of the largest in the collection, but the dimensions of these portraits are generally consistent with contemporary practice and are not usually dramatically larger than portraits of other women from the same period. Attention was directed to the special status of queens and royal women by the hangs: the South Kensington hang, which was ordered chronologically according to reign, placed portraits of the royal family in a central position in each periodic grouping (see figure 4). But royal difference could also be read visually in the portraits: within the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery's collection of women's portraits, the portraits of royal women are distinctive for the degree and quantity of embellishment with which their sitters are endowed, degrees which were interpreted as material evidence of the power of the sitter.

Queens were perceived to be peculiarly entitled to adornment as a perquisite of their station. Portraits of kings as well as queens often represent the elaborate ceremonial garments of coronation, but within the context of nineteenth-century discourses of gender, consumption and power, female dress and ostentation had a peculiar power to symbolise rank and authority. In the nineteenth century women's personal embellishment was particularly subject to interpretation in social, and hence moral, terms.⁴ Portraits of non-

⁴ This was famously, if somewhat contemptuously, analysed by Thorstein Veblen in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, (New York: Macmillan, 1899). More recent interpretations include Mariana Valverde, 'The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Ninetenth-Century Social Discourse', *Victorian Studies*, Winter 1989, 32(2): 169-88. Women's use and abuse of the family purse for their personal adornment was a familiar (and frequently comic) theme of family politics, one taken up by Erika Rappaport in '"A Husband and His Wife's Dresses": Consumer Credit and Debtor Family in England, 1864-1914', in Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough, eds., *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, (London, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996): 163-187.

royal women in the collection do not generally display their sitters in luxurious or ornamental dress: in the few instances where non-royal portraits are highly embellished, this aspect of the portrait was strongly associated with the illustration of pretentious or false behaviour.⁵ As a token of respect, the National Portrait Gallery deliberately refrained from introducing biographical descriptions of monarchs into their catalogues: the visual representation of royal women's power through material signifiers of their wealth provided a useful and legible key to illustrating the pre-eminent roles of queens in the history of the nation.⁶

The embellishment in the portraits of royals literally images one of the privileges and signifiers of monarchy. British monarchs have since Anglo-Saxon times been invested with their status through a ceremony of coronation, a complex procedure involving the making of oaths, the exchange of objects of symbolic importance (like crowns, rings and swords), and the literal investiture of the body with anointing oil. This manner of representing royalty actually bears a close relationship to the political means of establishing the body royal, but while portraits of British royalty have been described as 'instantly recognizable', it is hard to see why this should be so.⁷ There are traceable continuities in the coronation ceremony of English monarchs, but there has also been variety and change in the act of coronation, and more importantly here, in the objects which played a significant symbolic role in the ceremony and its subsequent implied or literal representation in portraiture.⁸ There are accounts of the making of new crowns and related objects for each succeeding monarch between the Restoration and the early twentieth century, when a 'traditional' regalia comprised of various elements of the

⁵See the discussion of this with reference to portraits of the Duchesses of Portsmouth and Cleveland in Chapter four, section II. The single exception to the rule that detailed ornamentation represented either power or the ambition for it is NPG 64, a portrait of Mary Scudamore acquired as a portrait of Mary Sidney. The acquisition documents reveal that Scharf and the Trustees were primarily interested in the text written on the painting, which was associated with the identification of the sitter, and this interest may have overwhelmed their other opinions on the painting.

⁶Stanhope wrote to Scharf instructing him to 'attempt no biographical narrative' in the catalogue entries for sovereigns on 3 March 1859.

⁷Richard Ormond, *The Face of Monarchy: British Royalty Portrayed* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977): 9. For a survey of painting in European courts see Michael Levey, *Painting at Court*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1971).

⁸Percy Ernest Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation*, trans. Leopold G. Wickham Legg, (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1937).

regalia of former monarchs was 'invented.'⁹ The signification of monarchy was not codified, but could be read in and represented by various kinds of objects.

The power of queens to command wealth in the form of jewelry and ornamentation transcended the ceremonial. Although no woman was crowned regnant until Mary I, after the Conquest the queen consort became a politically important figure by virtue of her honourific but unassailable influence over king and court. Importantly, along with this distinction came the means to support it: queens began to hold their own courts, to have administration of their own estates, and, probably beginning with the reign of Henry I, to accrue the benefit of a feudal payment called the queen's gold.¹⁰ Under Anglian law, according to Planché's *Cyclopedia of Costume* (1876), one of the few forms of property a woman could inherit from her mother was jewelry (necklaces, earrings and bracelets, to be precise). Stubbs' *Constitutional History* (1874) notes that the heirs of Norman kings, sons as well as daughters, were normally dowered with treasure rather than with land. From early on in the history of the English monarchy then, the possession of moveable property was an important privilege of the king's family, particularly of the daughters, who might inherit from both parents in this way. Together with the money incomes of the queen, and her investiture with the symbolic treasures in coronation, the queen's possession of glittering trifles became an important expression of her increasingly powerful position.

This feature of historical queenship obtained particular interest in the nineteenth century (both texts referred to above were published in the 1870s). The introduction to the Strickland sisters' famous biographical series, *Lives of the Queens of England* (1840-48), moves immediately from the required courtesy to the reigning female

⁹Tessa Rose, *The Coronation Ceremony of the Kings and Queens of England and the Crown Jewels*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1992): 13-31. See Cannadine 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c. 1820-1977' for a discussion of the coronation in the wider context of royal display during the period.

¹⁰The queen's gold was a tax of one piece of gold for every one hundred pieces of silver paid to the king. See William Stubbs, *The Constitutional History of England*, (Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1874): V. I, p. 341-42. Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*, reprint of 1840-1848 edition, Everyman's Library, ed. Ernest Rhys, (London: J.M. Dent, 1906) V. I: 2-4. A more whiggish reading of the queen's constitutional role is in Schramm.

monarch to a lengthy discussion of the perquisites of the queen consort. The distinction of being queen regnant must have appeared obvious to the Stricklands, as they remark little upon it except to briefly survey the relevant characters. But for queens consort, whose legal status in relation to her husband was as 'any other subject', the financial privileges attached to the position are treated as an important aspect of her station, one which helps to distinguish her from the rest of the court. This also distinguished queens from the vast majority of nineteenth-century wives, whose economic subordination to their husbands was increasingly an area of protest. Apart from the historical interest which was attached to the queen's purse in a constitutional context, the position of women in relation to property, in and out of the court, focussed attention on the pecuniary status of queens.

The language of dress as an expression of rank and power had particular resonance in images of women in the nineteenth century. For most women, dress expressed status within a complex and paternalistic social hierarchy with its own unspoken sumptuary laws. This was particularly true of court dress. Court dress has always been elaborate and ritualized, but historians regularly observe that during Victoria's reign the stipulations on dress for formal attendance at court was most rigidly defined and enforced (it is said that one had to exhibit a doctor's certificate to the Lord Chamberlain to be given permission to appear before Her Majesty in a high necked dress).¹¹ The colour and nature of the dress, and the type and extent of jewelry which a lady wore to court was formally prescribed, in some cases according to rank. In a time when women's dress was widely and openly discussed in press and society, it became a convenient metaphor for what was much less openly discussed: women's political and economic power.¹²

¹¹Una Campbell, *Robes of the Realm*, (London: Ede and Ravenscroft, 1989): 83-85. See also Alan Mansfield, *Ceremonial Costume*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1980): 126. The courtly hierarchy of ornamentation can be observed in the portraits reproduced in *Finden's Portraits of the Female Aristocracy of the Court of Queen Victoria*, (London: A. and E. Finden, 1849).

¹²The Empress Eugénie was a leader of contemporary politics and fashion: her elaborate pre-revolutionary type dresses were chosen for their political associations and were used to caricature her political rule in the English as well as the French press during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. See Therese Dolan, 'The Empress's New Clothes: Fashion and Politics in Second Empire France', *Woman's Art Journal*, Spring/Summer 1994: 22-28.

Elaboration of costume provided a legible register of the status which portraits of queens had to assert. Because dress and ornamentation were material objects as well as social signifiers, they were susceptible to the antiquarian evaluation that was an important strategy for authenticating portraits. Material remnants of a past age, jewelry became subject to the same kind of antiquarian scrutiny that portraiture did. In 1872 the South Kensington Museum mounted a loan exhibition of 'Ancient and Modern Jewellery and Personal Ornaments', run on similar lines to the Loan Exhibitions of portraiture of the late 1860s. Notably, most of the lenders and the whole of the organizing committee of this exhibition were women, although two well known experts on the portraiture of Mary Queen of Scots, Albert Way and Fraser Tytler, contributed a discussion of the Darnley jewel (a keepsake belonging to the mother of Lord Darnley, second husband of Mary Queen of Scots).¹³ The significance of their mutual antiquarian interest in jewelry and portraiture is in the way the two were exchanged: where jewelry was represented in portraits, it was understood to be a reliable material indicator of a sitter's status, and legible to the antiquarian expert.

The jewelry and clothing that were depicted in historical portraits were used by the antiquarian in documenting and authenticating portraits. In his catalogue of the library of the National Portrait Gallery, Sir George Scharf recorded numerous volumes dedicated to the history of costume which had been published in the latter half of the nineteenth century: one volume was the collected articles from the *Builder* by James Robinson Planché on 'The age and authenticity of the national portraits, tested by costume and heraldry'.¹⁴ Scharf's notes on portraits of women - particularly of women of the royal family - scrupulously document the type and nature of the clothing and jewelry represented in them, or its absence.¹⁵ The clothing and

¹³*Catalogue of the Loan Exhibition of Ancient and Modern Jewellery and Personal Ornaments*. Exhibition held at the South Kensington Museum, London, 1872, (London: John Strangeways, 1873).

¹⁴See *Early Library Catalogue* Volume 7, NPG, London. The articles from the *Builder* appeared on May 5, 19, 26 and June 2, 1866; they critically evaluate the National Portrait Exhibition at South Kensington. According to Christopher Breward, art historical studies were the first 'serious' use to which fashion histories were put: see his *The Culture of Fashion*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995): 1.

¹⁵See for example Scharf's notes in *National Portrait Gallery: The Notebooks of Sir George Scharf (1820-95)*. (microfilm reprint London: World Microfilms Publications, 1978): TSB 4: 52 and TSB 8: 13.

jewelry is often described in as much or more detail as the sitter's facial features. The representations of jewelry in portraits were treated as transparent documentation: in his notes on a painting of Mary of Modena, which was dubiously signed and might therefore have invited a degree of scepticism, Scharf disingenuously recorded 'crown indicates a royal personage'.¹⁶ Understood as a transparent register of the actual material circumstances they represent, the presence and arrangement of jewelry and ornamentation in royal portraits expressed the degree of social and economic power enjoyed by the sitter.

The interest in clothing and jewelry was most enthusiastic in the appreciation of Tudor portraits. Notable for their extensive and detailed painting of dress and jewelry, the relationship between the era in which almost all the competing heirs to the throne were women, and portraits which featured clothing above character, created a visual relationship between politically powerful women and elaborate ornamentation. This is particularly true of portraits of Queen Elizabeth. The prominence of dress in her portraits was an important object of their scholarship, and was (perhaps still is) the main means by which people understood her imagery. The nineteenth century regarded her as the paradigmatic queen: a 'daughter of the people' who was importantly never subject to the tyranny of marriage, 'her great regnal talents rendered her reign prosperous at home and glorious abroad, and caused the sway of female monarchs to be regarded as auspicious for some time to come.'¹⁷ The importance of dress in the portraits of this, England's most revered female monarch, almost certainly helped to establish the paradigm of the representation of feminine political power through the image of material wealth (figure 11).

This kind of interest in Tudor portraits probably centres on both the unfamiliarity of the dress represented, and the unfamiliarity of the nature of the representation.¹⁸ Dress in the Tudor courts was

¹⁶Scharf, TSB 8:10.

¹⁷Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, V. 1: 15.

¹⁸Interestingly, the first portrait of Elizabeth I acquired by the Portrait Gallery (NPG 108) was a miniature by Hilliard which reverses the usual relation of object/dress in Elizabeth's portraiture. Inscribed with the letters ER surmounted by crowns, the image directly reports royalty; her dress appears relatively modest, due to an 'extensive repainting' of the ruff

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Figure 11. Nicholas Hilliard, *Queen Elizabeth I* (1533-1603)
Miniature on vellum, 5.1 x 4.8, 1572, NPG 108

(referred to in many 20th century NPG conservation reports), which unusually does not exceed the line of her head. The reason that this miniature in particular might have been attractive to the Trustees is that the signifiers of power appear in a more conventional relationship to the central figure of the portrait.

strongly informed by an appreciation of its symbolic expressiveness; that appreciation is redoubled in the manner of its representation in portraiture.¹⁹ Tudor portraits, which intimately detail the textures of the sitter's brocades, velvets, lace and jewels, obtain a rich surface patterning at the expense of a sense of depth in the portraits. The paintings do represent diminishing space, but the uniform sharpness of light and focus in all planes of that space works against the illusion of a three dimensional picture space, an illusion that was central to the painting of portraits from the seventeenth century onwards. This distinctive manner of representing dress and ornamentation, which literally focusses the eye on the fine details of costume and jewelry, draws the viewer's attention to those details.

And it is those details which overwhelm the canvas. During the seventeenth century it became customary to represent the monarch with emblems of their coronation; before then the monarch was generally represented with material wealth of a less specifically symbolic nature.²⁰ Concerned rather with a general richness of dress, jewelry, and its representation (the jewelry was often done in gold paint, the quality of which was an indicator of the authenticity of the image), this extraordinary but unspecific elaboration worked into the aesthetic of women's pecuniary power extremely well. In the portraits of the Tudor queens - the most powerful, revered, and debated of English history - the body natural of the queen is resurfaced with an exotic and lavish encrustation. Not merely embellished, the Tudor queens are armoured in an almost unnatural body royal.

Scharf's description of one of Elizabeth I's portraits began, 'the queen stands erect in magnificent array with a radiating ruff of white lace, stomacher, farthingale, and train, but without any indication of royalty beyond a small arched crown in the centre of her feather

¹⁹Christopher Breward's chapter 'The Renaissance: the rhetoric of power' in *The Culture of Fashion*: 41-74, is good on this relationship.

²⁰This generalisation applies more to painted portraits than to sculpted ones. The monuments of Elizabeth I and Eleanor of Castile from Westminster Abbey which were copied for the National Portrait Gallery both image coronation objects.

fan.’²¹ What was for Scharf a notable absence in the portrait was in some respects an unremarkable one: Queen Elizabeth was rarely represented with any of the customary objects of investiture. She was however almost always portrayed with a degree of ostentation in her garments which earned her reputation in the nineteenth century for vanity and self-indulgence.²² In Scharf’s authoritative assessment, which begins with the clothes and puts the crown in a sub-clause, the description of the extravagant dress is made to work for or in place of more overt signifiers of royalty.

In the assessment of portraits of Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots, the signification of her position was performed by a different set of pictorial references in the paintings. The appearance of Mary Queen of Scots was understood to be an important historical issue: her beauty was reputed to be one of her more effective political tools, but in the nineteenth century ‘wherein lay her loveliness of person, or how far, as a woman, she was worthy of respect, neither history nor art can positively assert.’²³ Almost all nineteenth-century commentators on portraits of Mary Queen of Scots begin with an observation of the sort that the many portraits said to represent her ‘bear no marks of having been taken from one living and beautiful original’,²⁴ which deferred discussion of her portraits to other kinds of signifiers apart from the image of the sitter herself. Depending on the portrait, these are whatever kinds of objects could be identified as associated with her life and reign, and these other signifiers were used to authenticate a likeness of the queen.

²¹G. Scharf, probably referring to NPG 2471 acquired in 1930, in ‘Observations on a Portrait of Queen Elizabeth’, for the *Archaeologia*, V. 51: author’s offprint, NPG, London.

²²Agnes Strickland repeats Horace Walpole’s vilification of the effect of Elizabeth’s dress on her portraits in a passage on her ‘inordinate’ love of dress, *Lives of the Queens*, V. 4: 185/86; her indulgence of this passion is associated with the licence permitted her as queen, rather than any affirmation of her power *per se*.

²³Laurence Hutton, ‘The Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots’, *Century Magazine*, February 1889: 611.

²⁴Mr. Fraser Tytler, *On the Portraits of Mary, Queen of Scots, with Remarks on an Original Picture of that Princess, Recently Discovered*, (printed for private circulation, 1845): 1. My account of the portraits is based on this and a number of other monographs held by the NPG, including Anon. (G. Beauclerc), *Observations On the Authenticity of a Portrait of Mary Queen of Scots Here Exhibited*, n.d.; George Scharf’s lecture to the Society of Antiquaries 15 June 1876 and letters to the *Times* on the matter, published 7 February, 7 May, October 30, and December 26, 1888; Hutton’s ‘The Portraits of Mary Queen of Scots’ and the catalogue of the 1889 Mary Queen of Scots Exhibition, Peterborough.

The first portrait of Mary Stuart acquired by the Portrait Gallery was the Fraser Tytler portrait (NPG 96), so called because it was acquired from the son of an antiquarian of that name. Fraser Tytler Senior had written in 1845 a pamphlet on the portrait, asserting its authenticity on the basis of a partly visible coat of arms, the image in a pendant held by the sitter, and the landscape (a 'foreigner's' conception of Edinburgh) in the background. In the Portrait Gallery's 1866 catalogue, these are described as 'jewelled ornaments' and the devices on them are detailed for the sake of persuasion; the expert opinions on the authenticity of the portrait of Fraser Tytler and Mr. Albert Way are also cited in this unusually lengthy entry. The Fraser Tytler portrait is very naturalistic by the standards of Renaissance portraiture: the hair, face, and even the usually elaborate dress are painted a shade more softly and roundly than the high contrast portraits of the Tudor courts. The sitter looks out of the painting and away from the viewer with watchful eyes, showing a fearful quality which the Trustees might have deemed appropriate for an image of 'the unfortunate queen.' In 1888, after having been in doubt for more than ten years, the Trustees re-identified the sitter in this portrait as Mary of Lorraine, the mother of Mary Queen of Scots (the sitter is now unidentified).

Several events contributed to the 1888 re-identification of this portrait. One was the acquisition, in 1876, of a relatively indubitable portrait of Mary Queen of Scots from Beaurepaire, the Hampshire seat of a very ancient family who had been closely connected with the Royal family. The Beaurepaire portrait (NPG 429, figure 12) bore the mark of Charles I on the panel, identifying it as ex-Royal Collection. Showing the brown eyes and 'puckered' nose that Scharf concluded were her genuine features, the portrait represents Mary Stuart when captive. Thin lipped and with a severe expression, the Chairman of the Board wrote to Scharf at the time of its acquisition, 'one doesn't



Figure 12. After Nicholas Hilliard, *Mary Queen of Scots* (1542-87)
Panel, c. 1610, 79.1 x 90.2, NPG 429

like to think that so bony a female was our fair inhabitant of Lockliver'. If Hardinge found the image of the queen distasteful, he found another aspect of the portrait intriguing enough to approve of its acquisition: he continues, 'but the dress-appendages are curiosities in themselves.'²⁵ It is not clear whether this comment refers to her unusual sheer, lace trimmed cape, the M-shaped pendants on her choker, or more likely, to her crucifix and rosary; in any case it is clear that the 'appendages' were an important feature for critical attention. The features of dress and other symbolic details in the painting became the portrait's most absorbing features, and even if they do not specifically represent her royalty, work in place of the elaborate ornaments of state. In this, and in the portraits of the other more potent queens of English history, the queen is dressed in the abstract but definite signifiers of power: the dress is the literal embodiment of authority.

That these elements were an important visual expression of a woman's regal power is confirmed by the physical relationship they bear to the body royal, and the ways that it is differentiated according to a woman's status with respect to the crown. Portraits of queens regnant have the symbolic detail concentrated on the body and in the hands of the queen. Portraits of queens consort generally show the queen distanced in some way from the objects of investiture: where Charlotte Sophia appears in her portrait after Ramsay only approaching a table supporting the regalia of ermine and crown, which she touches lightly and reticently, the companion portrait of George III shows him thoroughly weighted with robes and leaning confidently on the table (NPG 223 and 224, figures 13 and 14 respectively). The history of the Gallery's acquisition of images of Mary II also demonstrate the importance of physically representative depiction of women's relationships to the symbols of power. Most of Mary II's portraits, including those collected by the NPG (606 & 197) show her at some distance from the crown. This physical relationship to the symbols of power - roughly the same as was assigned to Henrietta Maria, who was never crowned - must have been thought more appropriate for a monarch whose status as joint regent was understood to have been undermined by a power-hungry husband, a

²⁵Hardinge to Scharf, dated Wednesday (probably June 1876), Trustees' correspondence, NPG, London.
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Figure 13. Studio of Allan Ramsay, *Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz* (1744-1818)
Canvas, ca. 1762, 147.3 x 106.7, NPG 224



Figure 14. Studio of Allan Ramsay, *George III* (1738-1820)
Canvas, ca. 1767, 147.3 x 106.7, NPG 223

reading which avoided the painful subject of her heartless treatment of her father, James II. A portrait showing her actually holding the crown, which Scharf at any rate seemed to approve of, was rejected in 1886.²⁶

The arrangement of detail in the portrait clearly expressed the role of the woman represented within the patriarchal structures of the monarchy: the relationship between the ornaments and the body was usually a very literal representation of her authority. Jewelry and dress, particularly in portraits of women, were understood to be both an indicator of the status of the sitter and, if authentically painted, a guarantor of portrait's apparent claims to describe a person with that status. Ropes of pearls, textured skirts, fine lace ruffs, furred cuffs and collars, gilded ears and fingers, spangled bodices and beribboned hair vie for the viewer's attention and impress us with the sitter's command of a substantial purse, and, by implication, other forms of wealth and power. The arrangement of the sitter in relation to those signifiers of status also helped, as in Queen Charlotte's portrait, to distinguish her feminine position within a patriarchal structure.

But the elaborate ornamentation which characterized most of the portraits of queens and royal women was problematic in the context of nineteenth-century feminine ideals: while it represented the special status of the royal women, it could also connote vanity and wastefulness.²⁷ In their biographies, the Strickland sisters paid careful attention to describing the nature of the expenditures of queens, emphasizing the virtuous and feminine uses to which their resources were put: when writing of the debts of Elizabeth of York, they explained, 'whoever examines the privy-purse expenses of this queen, will find that her life was spent in acts of beneficence to the numerous claimants of her bounty'. A full page is spent in detailing her disbursements, which included annuities to her sisters and their husbands.²⁸ If the queen's luxuries could be constructed as evidence of feminine virtue in print, it was harder to imagine the presence of adornments in conventional portrait images as absolutely affirming

²⁶See Scharf, TSB 33:19, offer 179 c/4.

²⁷A jeweller called John Jones went so far as to publish his own moral defense of jewelry, *The History and Object of Jewelry* (London: the Author, 1847). The use of jewelry as a difficult and sometimes contradictory moral signifier is discussed in footnote 9 above and in Chapter four, section I below.

²⁸Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, V. 2: 437.

those values. While adornment showed royal difference, other portraits and their arrangement in the Gallery made a more transparent assertion of the femininity of queens.

II. The reign of femininity

While the body royal was described through emblematic ornamentation, the body natural was also an expressive feature in the Portrait Gallery's collection of royal portraits. The queen's individualized female body was recognizably and intrinsically part of her image, and was an element of the image which carried its own ideological weight. This can be seen literally in a coronation portrait of Queen Anne (NPG 215), which shows a rather broad figure, replete with double chin and slightly pudgy fingers. Not all of Anne's portraits show her so fleshy; but the first, and most formal of the portraits of her acquired by the Gallery thus makes reference to anecdotal reports of her reputedly extraordinary appetite. The excess of her body and implied lack of self-control represented here pictorially (and, for example, in the Strickland's biography) do seem to have been intended to describe an aspect of her character in the role of queen, but it may also refer to her maternal body.²⁹ The interest in the physical body of queens seems mainly to have devolved around their reproductive sexuality. Partly this had to do with women's significant role in the dynasty, and the representation of the continuous history of the monarchy which is discussed below; in other instances, the sexual connotations of the portraits have less to do with securing a dynasty than with securing a sexually respectable image for the Queens represented. Both concern the queens' conformity to contemporary ideals of femininity.

Queens were by no means exempt from the nineteenth-century tendency to entrench women in their sex; in fact they were arguably the paradigm of that process. Not simply politicians, queens were women, and much of the interest in and description of their lives was framed in terms of the feminine.³⁰ In her preface to *Lives of the*

²⁹On Anne's appetite see Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, V. 4: 185/86, V. 7: 114. Chapter four, section II describes an example of plumpness signifying a mature, maternal body.

³⁰See Nicola J. Watson, 'Gloriana Victoriana: Victoria and the cultural memory of Elizabeth I', *Remaking Queen Victoria*: 79-104, and Judith Rowbotham on 'History with a Purpose' in *Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction*, (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989): 146-178.

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Queens of England, Agnes Strickland wrote 'a queen is no ordinary woman, to be condemned on hear-say evidence; she is the type of the heavenly bride in the beautiful 14th Psalm - "Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are high, whatsoever things are pure, or of good report" in the female character, ought to be found in her.'³¹ Often constructed as figures of exemplary femininity, the feminine virtues were essential to queenliness.³² Sometimes the signifiers queen/woman slipped the other way: Mrs. Roe's *Uncrowned Queens: A Book of Historic Vignettes* (1878) referred not only to literal queens, but figurative ones, the 'silent, uncomplaining martyrs, who have borne their cross meekly, and having patiently endured the burden and heat of the day, have won their crown.'³³ A woman could wear either a literal or a metaphorical crown, and either invariably signified exemplary femininity.³⁴

Although royal women were exceptional, the National Portrait Gallery was careful to represent them within the framework of the gendered hierarchy of the family. This hierarchy was expressed visually in the hangs, which frequently observed the convention which placed the most powerful person at the centre top, with (usually) his family members and colleagues arranged about him in a way which depicted their relationships spatially. Queens generally were placed beside, opposite or beneath kings. Even the most powerful and extravagantly portrayed queen in the collection, Elizabeth, was exhibited in a position subordinate to her cousin and heir, James I: Scharf's records of the Tudor room at South Kensington in 1885 show her portraits hung below his. Elizabeth I's portraits were hung in the same relative position to James I's as Queen

³¹Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, V. 1: xviii.

³²Roy Strong observes in *And when did you last see your father?* (n.p.: Thames and Hudson, 1978) that it was after Victoria's accession that the legacy of the British monarchy was constructed as one of domestic virtue; also that 'in no other area was history a more useful quarry than in supplying Victorian society with models of ideal womanhood...[although] nothing could have been further from historic truth' (45).

³³Mrs. Roe, *Uncrowned Queens: A Book of Historic Vignettes* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1878): 1.

³⁴John Ruskin also used this metaphor in his instructive lecture, *Sesame and Lilies* (London: George Allen, 1899): 87-143; a considered essay on the implications of the use of 'queenliness' as a metaphor for femininity is to be found in Sharon Aronofsky Weltman, "Be no more housewives, but Queens": Queen Victoria and Ruskin's domestic mythology,' *Remaking Queen Victoria*: 105-122; see in the same volume Alison Booth, 'Illustrious company: Victoria among other women in Anglo-American role model anthologies': 59-78.

Caroline's portraits were to that of George IV, and Van Dyck's portrait *The Children of Charles II* to the portrait of their mother, Henrietta Maria. These arrangements created potent representations of relative power that were informed as much by the convention of representing (patriarchal) genealogies as they were by relationships between individual sitters.

The familiarly feminine aspect of queenliness was also asserted through the acquisition of portraits which were inflected with some other tradition than that of coronation portraiture, and could be read in the nineteenth century as familial images.³⁵ The acquisition of these images was probably made attractive in part by the lesser expense of acquiring and accommodating them compared to large coronation portraits; but they also offered an apparently welcome opportunity to pictorially develop descriptions of the character or historical activities of the monarch represented, descriptions which the catalogue did not include.³⁶ Portraits which are not official coronation portraits seem obviously selected for their power to invoke appropriately gendered qualities or narratives.

This descriptive departure from images of coronation is also marked in the collection of portraits of kings and male consorts. The first portrait acquired of Charles I (NPG 297) showed him in armour; this military theme likewise characterizes their portrait of Philip II of Spain, consort of Mary I (NPG 347). The portrait purchased of William III shows him as a child (NPG 272): this may have been intended as a comment on his character, or the image of a child may be a reference to his hereditary entitlement to the English throne, or both. The portraits of Charles II acquired in the nineteenth century might be construed as a selection designed to emphasize his perceived superficiality over his role as monarch. NPG 153 is a false

³⁵ Stanhope originally claimed that he was not interested in building a collection of Royal pictures, Stanhope to Scharf, 31 May 1858, Trustees' correspondence, NPG. In 1864, Stanhope modified his assertion when he suggested that it 'would not be to the advantage of our Gallery to acquire more Royal Portraits of a *formal* character' (my italics), Stanhope to Scharf, 14 March 1864, Trustees' correspondence, NPG.

³⁶ The early catalogues of the Portrait Gallery do not give more than a very skeletal biography of reigning monarchs, giving only their dates, including their dates of accession. During the preparation of the first catalogue, Stanhope wrote to Scharf advising him against developing a description of the lives of monarchs: see letter dated 3 March 1859, Trustees' correspondence, NPG. The portrait itself was the only expressive or descriptive feature presented.

oval by Lely, showing Charles II's head in shoulders in a format which was frequently used for portraits of Tudor monarchs: that, however, is the only gesture to his kingship. His characteristic full and loose hair - associated in the nineteenth century with women in sexual or at least intimate moments - is the dominating feature of the painting. Bordered by a loosely painted illusionistic gilt 'frame', the portrait suggests feminine artifice. This theme was continued by the second acquisition (NPG 173), an extravagant allegorical scene of apotheosis punningly rendered in miniature. If the ceremonial dress of the coronation provided the standard for signifying the body royal, the Portrait Gallery showed considerably invention in their departures from that standard when it served the interests of historical interpretation.

Choosing a portrait (or eventually, portraits) of Queen Caroline, the never-crowned consort of George IV, offered a particularly challenging problem with respect to the interpretation of her role in the court and the royal family. Queen Caroline and her conduct were the subject of intense scrutiny in 1820, when she was tried in the House of Lords for adultery (in the interest of building a case for divorce) by her estranged husband. The subject of a great deal of attention in the press and popular print: the so-called 'Queen Caroline affair' roused the sympathies of a wide cross-section of the population, and summoned up petitions, broadsheets and conversation in favour of the offended lady.³⁷ So potent was the public debate over her trial that she was remembered forty years later by the one of the Trustees of the Portrait Gallery as an 'injured innocent'.³⁸ This sympathetic memory of the queen was expressed in the collection by the acquisition of two portraits: both emphatically represent her in the garb of virtuous womanhood, a womanhood which was deliberately evoked in order to suspend the political and sexual contention which sprung it into significance.

³⁷See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (London: Pimlico, 1994): 262-273; Anna Clark, 'Queen Caroline and the Sexual Politics of Popular Culture in London, 1820', *Representations*, 1990, 31: 47-68; Thomas Laqueur, 'The Queen Caroline Affair: Politics as Art in the Reign of George IV', *Journal of Modern History*, September 1982, 54: 417-466; Dror Wahrman, "'Middle-Class" Domesticity Goes Public: Gender, Class, and Politics from Queen Caroline to Queen Victoria', *Journal of British Studies*, October 1993, 32: 396-432.

³⁸William Smith wrote to Scharf of the trial 'I was then twelve years old, and a furious partisan in favour of that injured innocent.' Letter dated 19 June 1862, Trustees' correspondence, NPG, London.

In an 1803/04 portrait by Thomas Lawrence, Princess Caroline reclines comfortably on a sofa, her lap swathed in the folds of her scarlet velvet dress (NPG 244, figure 15). She wears a jaunty hat with a great feather, but looks out with a serious expression and penetrating dark eyes. In her right hand the Princess holds a modelling tool, which points up to a bust. Mostly in the shadow, the bust was understood to be a portrait of the Duke of Brunswick, father of the sitter. The inclusion of a column on the right and the bust give the setting of the portrait an air of classical grandeur; but it is still undeniably an interior. The sitter and her activities are domestic, and refer to the shaping of men and the civilising influence of women's homely arts, a notion which had much currency both at the time the portrait was painted and at the time of its acquisition. This theme was repeated in an 1878 acquisition of a painting by Lonsdale (NPG 498, figure 30) which shows Caroline in what was the typical pose of the authoress: her right elbow and left hand rest on an open book, and she gazes thoughtfully at the viewer, her hair bound in a lacy scarf; the ordinariness of the pose sits in striking contrast with her jewelled court dress.

Represented in her youth, in the solemn role of domestic, cultured womanhood, these paintings seem to give no scope for the representation of the controversy invoked by the trial. But the representation of unassailable womanhood both refers to, and works to foreclose the questions around Caroline's activities which gave such urgency to the debate around the Prince's divorce as a question of gender. This is especially true of the Lawrence: it was likely to have been widely remembered that Lawrence, who stayed at the Princess' residence during the painting of the picture, was one of the men with whom she was accused of engaging in adulterous behaviour.³⁹ The composition of his picture was revived in an explicitly political painting by Lonsdale, which was engraved by Henry Meyer and

³⁹She was found innocent of this charge. This information comes from notes on the painting held by the NPG. It was possibly for this reason that the Trustees were unusually scrupulous in their deliberations and decision to acquire the portrait. Offered first by C.H. Waters to the the Trustees' meeting of 19 June 1865, it was declined at the subsequent meeting. Waters offered it again at the meeting of 25 July 1867, when the Trustees took care to record the reasons for their decision to accept the portraits, specifically that the presence of the modelling tool and bust could be legitimately explained, and that Francis Grant, P.R.A., testified to the interest of the portrait. Minutes of Trustees' meetings, NPG, London.



Figure 15. Sir Thomas Lawrence, *Caroline of Brunswick* (1768-1821)
Canvas, 1804, 140.3 x 111.8, NPG 244



Figure 16. Henry Meyer after James Lonsdale, *Queen Caroline* engraving, published 1820

published in 1820 (the year of the trial). This image, which would have been more widely circulated than the painting, shows Caroline seated again, in full regal garb, tiara included; in place of the bust is a crown, and in place of the sculptor's tool she holds a letter addressed to the King (figure 16). Caroline looks out of the picture to the right with a steadfast and assertive gaze, resolute in her defense. This engraving reveals the subtle ways in which superficially domestic imagery was co-opted for propagandistic purposes within the context of the trial. Each in their own way, the Lawrence and the Lonsdale collected by the Portrait Gallery evoked the imagery and events surrounding Queen Caroline's contribution to British political life and to firmly reinstate her in the realm of exemplary if unexceptional femininity.

Another queen whose portraits were obviously selected with an eye to affirming her sexually respectable status in the midst of an apparently debauched court is Catherine of Braganza. The Portuguese consort of Charles II, the portraits painted of her in England were by the court artists of the Restoration, and partake of the voluptuous and extravagant semi-classical imagery typical of their portraits of women.⁴⁰ The Portrait Gallery acquired these kinds of portraits of Catherine late in the century, one by Gascar in 1881 (NPG 623) and one after Huysmans in 1879 (NPG 597). But the first portrait of this sitter acquired by the Portrait Gallery was a portrait after Dirk Stoop purchased in 1872 (NPG 353, figure 17), and was unusually prized considering that the portrait was not painted in England, and is archaically stiff for the period. It shows Catherine as a very young woman, when she still lived in Portugal. A bust portrait, the shoulders are covered with a lace densely patterned collar to the neck, which effectively disguises almost any shape in her body. Her face in part profile, the future queen looks seriously, wisely and sceptically straight out at the viewer - notably different from the inviting looks which characterise most Restoration portraits of women. This sensible and intelligent image would have cut a much more presentable figure in nineteenth-century London than her subsequent portraits, and Catherine would certainly have stood out as the most respectable woman in the Restoration Court as it was represented in the gallery.

⁴⁰These are discussed at more length in Chapter four on beauties.
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Figure 17. After Dirk Stoop, *Catherine of Braganza* (1608-1735)
Canvas, ca. 1660-61, 62.2 x 55.2, NPG 353

Both Caroline, as a figure of the Regency, and Catherine as Queen of the Restoration, had reputations that during the middle-nineteenth century required special care and attention. Fortunately, suitable portraits of both women came within the reach of the Gallery. But the ways that exemplary femininity could be represented in the collection of the Portrait Gallery were limited by the nature of the portraits that interested the Trustees. Where exemplary femininity was largely expressed in the subject's relation to children, parents, husband, the portraits collected by the Portrait Gallery were images of single individuals. Two exceptions to that rule are discussed below, but frequently the Trustees' selections managed to imply royal women's familial relations without actually depicting more than one individual. The representation of maternity and relations of succession were also important to the Portrait Gallery's collection of queens and royal women, and to its representation of the Englishness of the royal family. There are two images in the nineteenth-century collection which explicitly refer to the maternity of their sitter. One is the portrait of Queen Anne referred to above, which shows her in her upright youth, as Princess Anne (NPG 325, figure 18). Painted before her coronation, it lacks the elaborate impedimenta of state featured in the first portrait acquired of her by the Portrait Gallery, but still acknowledges her position with a sash of ermine. A more obviously important feature of the portrait is the inclusion of her son, a child of two or three years, who leans against her knee and is enfolded in her gentle embrace, one hand on his shoulder and the other holding his own tiny hands. Although both figures are looking out at the viewer, these gestures express a tender intimacy between the two subjects, attentive mother and trusting son. The other portrait in which maternity is figured explicitly is that of Henrietta Maria, the never-crowned consort of Charles I (NPG 227). Another multiple of a famous Van Dyck, this is an extremely modest and charming portrait of the Queen as a young woman, smiling contentedly, with her arms folded across her belly in the gesture of holding an infant. Placed at South Kensington directly over the portrait of her children (though the painting is called *The Children of Charles I*), this portrait and its hanging position emphasised the Queen's dynastic role over her personal status as consort.



Figure 18. After Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Queen Anne with her son, William, Duke of Gloucester* (1665-1714)
Canvas, c. 1694, 121.9 x 100.3, NPG 325

Both these images figure not only the maternal queen, but important moments in the succession. The Portrait Gallery's interest in these cruxes is consistent with Roy Strong's observation that contemporary history painting was obsessed with the ephemerality of monarchy, frequently figured through women (though he is thinking of beheaded queens more than bereaved ones).⁴¹ It was Henrietta Maria's family that was tossed by the storms of regicide and restoration, and the portrait of Anne with her son is a pathetic reminder of her many children who, all dying, opened the way to the Hanoverian succession. The continuity of the succession was interrupted at these moments, but subsequently restored (one way or another): the connections at many of those points were figured through the female dynastic line. The portraits of royal women collected by the National Portrait Gallery during the nineteenth century play a considerable role in figuring that continuity. The reproductive role of the queen (or princess) in this way was implicitly, if not explicitly, represented in a larger part of the collection than is initially obvious.

The acquisition of a portrait of the putatively pregnant Henrietta Maria was followed within the year by the purchase of a copy of the famous Van Dyck of her children (NPG 267, a multiple of a portrait in the Royal Collection). The spectator is reminded that regicide was also patricide, and that Charles I's successors were small children during the Civil War. Henrietta Maria's tender care of her fatherless children (and her politicking in France) was an important feature of the account of the interregnum. Women also bridged the gap between the early Stuart and the Hanoverian succession, and are well-represented considering that they were minor members of the family who left the country. These include Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia (NPG 71 and 511); her only daughter, Elizabeth Princess Palatine (NPG 543); and her grand-daughter Sophia Electress of Hanover.⁴² The first named was James I's daughter, and George I's great-grandmother; the second and third were George I's great-aunt and mother respectively. Great-aunt Elizabeth Princess Palatine returned to England as Abbess of Hertford in 1667. The Englishness

⁴¹Roy Strong, *And When Did you Last See Your Father?:* 44

⁴²NPG 340 was purchased as Sophia Electress of Hanover, but later identified as her aunt, Elizabeth Princess Palatine; see Registry documents, NPG, London.

of the Hanoverians was descended from the maternal line: it was, in fact, feminine.

The maternal line was thus used to bridge certain gaps in the history of the monarchy, as represented in the National Portrait Gallery during the nineteenth century. In terms of patriarchy this might be understood as a limited form of continuity, particularly since it was unclear how women participated in racial or national descent; the role of the queen was not figured consistently in the Portrait Gallery's early collection.⁴³ The sometimes shadowy significance of maternity to the collection of queens is suggested by the absence of a portrait of Sophia of Zell (or Celle), wife of George I and mother of George II, whose portrait has never been acquired by the gallery although she left a significant legacy to the nation in the form of a succeeding monarch. This was probably a consequence of her having been divorced by George in 1694, more than twenty years before he succeeded to the English throne: since she never lived in England, Sophia of Zell failed to rate inclusion. However, another reason might have been lurking behind her exclusion. At least one nineteenth-century publication accused Sophia of Zell of 'the impurity of thought and immodesty of action which are so commonly observable among female aristocrats', a slight used to cast doubt on the paternity of George I's heir.⁴⁴ It was perhaps not so much the unimportance of her role in the reign of George I as her doubtful contribution to the succession which left her image unsought.

The pattern of maternity in the collection thus has a slightly slippery quality. It has an unpredictable character, but then all the signifiers which patterned the collection of royal women are irregular: maternity in general; tokens of modesty; and the presence of ornamental wealth and other symbols of earthly power, all erupt apparently at random throughout the history of the female monarchs. But as a collection, the royal portraits were not random. They had a chronology that was sealed almost impeccably - so impeccably that it could function as the central element of the narrative for the entire collection. While the coherence of the visual characteristics of the portraits is evident over the collection as a whole, they do not

⁴³See Michael Ragussis, 'The Birth of a Nation in Victorian Culture: The Spanish Inquisition, the Converted Daughter, and the "Secret Race"', *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Spring 1994): 477-508.

⁴⁴Anon., *Crimes of the Aristocracy* (London: W. Whaley & Co., 1837): 79. *Facing Femininities*: Chapter 3

reinforce a narrative which could be constructed through the chronology. The features which could be said to characterize the two primary themes of the collection - worldly power and femininity - do not appear in a chronological pattern.

The richness of the material detail in portraits from the Renaissance reappear differently, but just as forcefully, in portraits of Hanoverian Queen Consorts, and again in a portrait of Queen Victoria by Hayter (discussed below). Visual signifiers which could be co-opted by nineteenth-century femininity appear in a portrait of Catherine of Braganza from the mid-seventeenth century and in portraits of Queen Caroline from the early nineteenth. Maternity is referred to in portraits of Philippa of Hainault (famously the mother of the Black Prince, and installed next to him), Henrietta Maria, and Queen Anne. No narrative of femininity or indeed the qualities of queenship can be discerned here, nor, probably, was such an implication intended: the queens constitute no whiggish account of the history of women in society. The portraits of queens seem determined to construct a changeless ideal within English national history, an ideal of English femininity. Constructing an image which is ahistorical - which relates equally to the present and the past - within a historically sensitive context demands a subtle negotiation of tradition and modernity. The complexity of the entire collection of royal women's portraits was focussed in the portraits of the one most important sitter in the collection: Queen Victoria.

III. The modern monarch: the image of Victoria

It was in 1883 that the National Portrait Gallery was able to hang a portrait of the nation's reigning monarch. Although acquired relatively early in the history of the Gallery, it was long awaited. An exceptional acquisition, it figured the only living person in the Portrait Gallery, and was literally the crowning image in a considerable and nearly complete collection of royal women. The portrait dealt visually with the problem of imaging the queen through devices similar to those which have been identified in the rest of the collection. The coincidence is hardly surprising since the formalities of both Victoria's portraiture and the Portrait Gallery's collection of Royal women were being developed during the mid-century: that the two 'institutions' (and Victoria's public portraiture

was never anything less than institutional) found similar solutions to representing royal women reflects similar concern, and success, in dealing with the problem of the 'national'.⁴⁵ The solutions were similar, but not always identical: the first portrait presented by the Queen does not seem to have satisfied the conditions of representation for the reigning monarch which were set up by the portraits of her predecessors, and was replaced by a coronation portrait which combined more successfully the dual iconographies of female monarchy represented in the National Portrait Gallery.

Given that the Portrait Gallery's collection of royal women was nearly complete before Her Majesty condescended to provide a portrait of herself, her image (or its absence) stood in complex relation to the remainder of the collection. Through most of the process of collecting portraits of female monarchs, Victoria's image was absent from the gallery. But Victoria was haunted by her predecessors, in and outside the Gallery. Her reign was seen as the culmination of the work of a long series of monarchs, and particularly of queens. Even before her reign acquired all the explicit comparisons with Elizabeth I's that could be made after her occupation of the long imperial throne, Victoria appeared in a cartoon having a vision of Elizabeth, who is admonishing her for letting 'grief prevail o'er duty'.⁴⁶ The images of past monarchs were collected by the Portrait Gallery in the context of a wider culture of images of Victoria, whose image would have through some means been known to its visitors. Not only would the paintings in the Portrait Gallery be seen in relation to the wider context of images of Victoria which were

⁴⁵For interpretive surveys of Victoria's portraiture see Margaret Homans 'To the Queen's Private Apartments: Royal Family Portraiture and the Construction of Victoria's Sovereign Obedience'; Ira B. Nadel, 'Portraits of the Queen'; and for a different thematic emphasis, Susan P. Casteras, 'The wise child and her "offspring": some changing faces of Queen Victoria,' *Remaking Queen Victoria*: 182-199. A good survey of her portraiture can be found in Oliver Millar, *The Victorian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, 2 Volumes, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For the unconvincing argument that this was part of an long-term trend in royal portraiture see Schama in 'The Domestication of Majesty'. For a literary example of this strategy, see *The Maiden Monarch, or, Island Queen*, (London: R. Hastings, 1840), a novel whose main interest is a thinly disguised young Victoria, whose inspired and overtly feminine care of her 'people' works as an effective and desirable antidote to republicanism/chartism.

⁴⁶Unknown artist, 'A Vision', *The Razor*, 11 July 1863. On the construction of Victoria's relation to her predecessors during the nineteenth century see Nicola J. Watson, 'Gloriana Victoriana: Victoria and the cultural memory of Elizabeth I', and Leonée Ormond, "'The spacious times of great Elizabeth": The Victorian Vision of the Elizabethans', *Victorian Poetry*, 1987, 25(3/4): 29-46; .
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circulated outside the Gallery, they would in some sense have to substitute for those images.

If her absence from the collection before 1883 created a difficult relationship between the image of monarch present and monarchs past, the presence of her portrait after 1883 was equally problematic. On the one hand, within the gallery the historic royal women and Victoria were disassociated from each other. The National Portrait Gallery established no literal physical relationships between portraits of past monarchs and their current Queen: since the portraits were hung in chronological order, monarchs appeared with their temporal rather than their social peers. On the other hand, Victoria represented the culmination of the series through which the Portrait Gallery's narrative was structured: to be a recognisable, and suitable, addition to that series her portrait had to function within the terms of representation already established in the collection. Victoria's portraits, commissioned for the present, had in the Portrait Gallery also to function in the context of the past.

The Trustees had written to Her Majesty as early as 1867 to solicit pictures of herself and Prince Albert, although the gift of her own portrait was not forthcoming until 1883.⁴⁷ The first portrait of the Queen which was presented to the Portrait Gallery was an 1883 copy of a portrait by Heinrich von Angeli in 1875 (NPG 708, figure 19). Queen Victoria had decided opinions about how she should be represented, and exercised quite strict control over her own portrait images, especially with respect to state portraits and those which were displayed to the public from her private collection. Victoria's portraits can be considered to have been deliberate and intentional representations. The Abercromby/von Angeli portrait is one of many of Victoria's portraits which noticeably adopt the strategy of giving due courtesy to the formal authority of the crown without granting it an overwhelming power. Throughout her reign gender was explicit in Victoria's portraits: her femininity, figured differently at different

⁴⁷Victoria gave a copy of the 1859 Winterhalter portrait of Albert, a pendant to her own state portrait painted in the same year, in 1867 (NPG 237). Lord Stanhope's letter of thanks dated 11 April 1867 included a request for her own portrait but, curiously, at no time does it seem to have been proposed that the matching portrait of herself be entered in the Gallery. Trustees correspondence, NPG, London.



Figure 19. Lady Julia Abercromby after Heinrich von Angeli, *Queen Victoria* (1819-1901)
Water-colour, 1883 (1875), 145.7 x 97.8, NPG 708

periods of her life, seems to have been deployed self-consciously to qualify the image of her authority. If this kind of representation was fundamentally consistent with the rest of the Portrait Gallery's collection of images of female royals, it failed to be a quite convincing balance between the feminine and the authoritative.

A three-quarter length of approximate life size, the dimensions of Victoria's portrait were comparable to the Gallery's portraits of Queen Anne, and larger than those of Queen Elizabeth. Victoria is shown standing before a background composed of a window, a column, and a wall upon which hangs the royal arms; a familiar composition for royal portraits which suggests a classicising (hence de-historicised) setting.⁴⁸ If the setting is familiar, the figure is less recognisably that of the reigning monarch. She wears two formal state embellishments - the ribbon and star of the Garter, and the Order of Victoria and Albert - but the portrait of herself and Albert which ornamented the award of their order can equally be read as a personal token of her painful mourning. Her dress is that of mourning rather than state: she wears no ermine, only a simple black dress, and her head is crowned with nothing more elaborate than a neat lace cap. This is certainly a portrait of the Queen: Victoria herself insisted on the serious expression for just that reason.⁴⁹ But the humble plainness of her dress and very literally represented face and figure stand in some contrast to the ermine and gold-laden images of queens past.

The portrait had to be accepted by Gallery as a gift from, and the only image of, their monarch, but at least one visitor wrote to the Gallery expressing his disappointment in what he described as an 'indifferent' representation of the Queen.⁵⁰ Painted originally by von Angeli in oils, the copy given to the Gallery was a watercolour on paper. Lacking the body, opacity and most importantly the formal

⁴⁸The connotations of the classicising tradition (associated with academic painting) universalising rather than particularising. The reference could be interpreted as consistent with the iconography of continuity or transcendence in royal images in the Portrait Gallery. The appearance of the classicising tradition in the Portrait Gallery's collection is discussed at more length in Chapter three.

⁴⁹Oliver Millar, *The Victorian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*: Text volume: 5.

⁵⁰A slightly less than gracious letter of thanks for the portrait was written by Viscount Hardinge, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, to Lady Abercromby 20 November 1883. The visitor critic was W. Earl, who wrote to the National Portrait Gallery 3 May 1897. Trustees' correspondence, NPG, London.

authority of the traditional oil portrait, the rendering of the image in watercolour lessened the painting's power to impress as an image of the Queen.⁵¹ Scharf distinguished the portrait by hanging it on a special screen which was in turn placed on a carpet, forming what he described as a 'distinct tabernacle'; but the small and intimate image of the Queen was dominated by the magisterial and youthful image of Albert painted by Winterhalter in 1859 (NPG 237), which was its companion within the Gallery.⁵¹ In her portrait Victoria appeared older, smaller, and less embellished than Winterhalter's Prince Albert: the image of the Queen in the Portrait Gallery was subordinated to that of her late husband, which may have pleased Victoria, but apparently not the Trustees. These portraits intimated what was a common complaint of Victoria's period of deep mourning for Prince Albert, that Victoria's image was too much that of the widow, and not enough of the queen.

The acquisition of a different portrait of Victoria was initiated in 1899 by the Marquess of Normanby's offer to loan Wilkie's 1838/39 state portrait of the Queen to the Portrait Gallery.⁵² The Trustees wrote to the Treasury for permission to accept the loan on the grounds 'that there should be one or more adequate representations of Her Most Gracious Majesty' in the National Portrait Gallery, and representing that there was a 'growing desire on the part of the public that the nation should possess a portrait of Her Majesty painted by a native artist', but the offer was subsequently withdrawn by the Marquess 'in accordance with the wish of her majesty.'⁵³ Victoria then offered to make a gift of a copy of an early portrait by Hayter of herself in coronation robes, which she presented to the Portrait Gallery in 1900. Both images were formal full-length coronation portraits which were more fully embellished with the emblems of state and with state dress; either would have satisfied the Trustees' (apparent) desire for a more official and more ornamented portrait of Victoria. But Victoria's own preference for

⁵¹Scharf to (Doynce?) at the Office of the Works, 21 November 1883, Trustees' correspondence; see photographs of South Kensington in 1885, NPG, London, for the final arrangement.

⁵²The offer was made and accepted by the Trustees at their meeting 29 June 1899.

⁵³Viscount Peel to A.J. Balfour, First Lord of the Treasury, 30 May 1899, Trustees' Correspondence, NPG. Letter from the Marquess of Normanby read into the minutes of Trustees' meeting of 27 July 1899. The NPG also possessed at that time a plaster cast of a bust by J.E. Boehm (NPG 858).

the Hayter over the Wilkie can be interpreted to suggest that she wished her public representation to emphasise, as did the Abercromby/von Angeli portrait, the woman that wore the robes.

In 1838-39 David Wilkie, who had been appointed Painter-in-Ordinary by George IV in 1830, painted for state purposes a larger-than-life size portrait of Victoria in parliamentary robes (figure 20). The picture is within the Georgian tradition of state portraits and descends directly from the images he created of William IV (1831-32) and Queen Adelaide (1834). It was in part because Wilkie used existing conventions of portraiture that he failed to create a satisfactory image for the new Queen. Shown standing before an outdoor sky which is framed on the right by a corinthian column and by drapery on the left, the Queen's left hand reaches limply towards a plinth upon which the regalia rests; this gesture is balanced by the sweep of her ermine cape which falls from her right shoulder to the edge of the picture space. This pyramidal composition is stabilized by the vertical drop of her right arm from her shoulder and the long white skirt which appears through her robes, both roughly in the centre of the figure. If the Queen's figure was intended to appear upright, stable, and forthright, the squareness and lack of movement give her a lifeless carriage. Further deadening of the Queen's image is achieved in the rendering of the face, which gazes directly but expressionless at the viewer. This painting was disliked as much as most of Wilkie's later portraits, and certainly did not present an inspiring image of the new Queen. It was quickly discarded in favour of one painted by Hayter.⁵⁴

The portrait by Hayter (NPG 1250, figure 21) was more successful, and selected by the Queen as the official state portrait: it was reproduced frequently and for wide distribution. Hayter's picture differs considerably from Wilkie's, producing an image which suggests both retiring femininity and regal authority. The background is entirely textile, a rich surrounding of tapestries and drapery surmounted by an awning. Light falls through the awning to

⁵⁴H.A.D. Miles, 'Wilkie as a Portraitist: Observations on "A National Misfortune"', *Sir David Wilkie of Scotland (1785-1841)*, ed. H.A.D. Miles and David Blayney Brown, (Raleigh: North Carolina Museum of Art, 1987): 49-58 and Oliver Millar, *Victorian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1992).



Figure 20. David Wilkie, *Queen Victoria*
Canvas, 1840, 250.8 x 147.4, Board of Trustees of the National
Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Port
Sunlight



Figure 21. Sir George Hayter, *Queen Victoria*
Canvas, 1863 (replica of 1838), 285.8 x 179, NPG 1250

illuminate the figure of the Queen, who is seated on a throne with lion-faced arms which peek out from behind her robes. There are only two precedents for an image of the English monarch seated, a Kneller of Queen Anne and John Michael Wright's portrait of Charles II. It is unlikely that Hayter knew of Kneller's Charles II, so the image may refer - quite naturally for a portrait wishing to emphasise the sex of the monarch - to Queen Anne.⁵⁵ The Queen's body, draped in white, rises out of the darkly and richly coloured gold and red robes. The robes fall away from her body to show her pleated white dress which is tied at the waist; the fall of the drapery reveals the shape of her bust and her legs. The quiet femininity of the figure is reinforced by her seated position: her physical body is passive rather than active, present to be addressed by rather than to address the viewer. Her absence of engagement with the viewer is further established by the direction of her gaze up and to her right. The figure is eminently feminine, and non-confrontational: this is not an image of domineering monarchy.

But the signification of Victoria's pose and dress is more complex than a simple rendering of feminine retirement. Hayter's portrait of Victoria may also have referred to the French painter Ingres' imperious portrait of Napoleon from 1806, which represents its sitter seated on a raised throne in full imperial regalia.⁵⁶ Hayter's is a more subtle version of Ingres' composition, in which gestures of withdrawal rather than command are used to establish Victoria's authority. As a crowned monarch, Victoria's body is literally adorned with the regalia: in her right arm she holds the Sceptre with the Cross, and she wears the large Imperial State Crown. The direction of her gaze is repeated by the direction of the sceptre, which she holds away from her body and pointing toward the light. If her body suggests retiring obedience, it is obedience to a higher authority, one

X² ⁵⁵See Millar, *Victorian Pictures*: Text volume: xix fn. 22. The painting may have a foreign reference, ⁵Ingres' portrait of Napoleon discussed below.

⁵⁶In 1806 Ingres painted Napoleon seated and in full coronation-type regalia. Hayter may have seen Ingres' painting when he visited Paris in 1815, the same year it was hung in the Louvre. He subsequently travelled to Rome where Ingres was also residing, and may have met the painter and seen preparatory works for the Napoleon portrait. Hayter's teacher, Benjamin Haydon, was a great admirer of Napoleon and painted several portraits of him during the 1830s. Using a revised version of Napoleon's portrait may have been seen as a celebration of legitimate monarchy over Napoleon's commandeered authority. My thanks to Tina Fiske of the NPG for providing me with chronologies of Hayter, Haydon and the Ingres portrait.

which descends from the heavens with the light. Hayter's success was in capitalising on Victoria's sex to image the hierarchy which structured the relation between God and Crown, nation and subject, woman and man. In Hayter's portrait (and in the most successful of her later portraits) Victoria is invested simultaneously with the roles of ruler and subject, leader and follower, an image which captures the complexities of authority embedded in the 'nation'.

Rather than arguing with Elizabeth Langland that 'images that depict Victoria as middle-class mother derogate from representations of her as queen regnant', I want to suggest that portraits of Victoria imaged a model Englishness synecdochically, through her role within a nuclear family.⁵⁷ This bears a close relation to Margaret Homans' argument that the trope of wife was a politically expedient way of representing the monarchy during the mid-nineteenth century, although this argument concerns Victoria's status as woman rather than wife, and her relation to the nation rather than simply to parliament.⁵⁸ Following Abby Zanger's observation that in the ceremonials of the *ancien régime* the role of queens was to distract from problematic aspects of patrilineal monarchy, I want to argue here that Victoria's iconography was so powerful because it assembled signifiers of all possible positions - those gendered masculine as well as feminine - within the national.⁵⁹ In and outside the National Portrait Gallery, Victoria was represented as a (feminine) subordinate as well as a (masculine) authority, imaging the status of national subject in a familiar and accessible fashion.

⁵⁷ 'Victoria in the developing narrative of Englishness', *Remaking Queen Victoria*: 16.

⁵⁸ Margaret Homans, 'To the Queen's Private Apartments'. While I think Homans' insight into Victoria's iconography is a good one, it is clear that Victoria's portraiture before marriage can be read in a similar way as that after her marriage, which justifies reconsidering the terms of the argument. Ira B. Nadel periodizes her portrait images along similar lines, but includes portraits made before her marriage, in 'Portraits of the Queen'.

⁵⁹ Abby Zanger, 'Making Sweat: Sex and the Gender of National Reproduction in the Marriage of Louis XIII', *Yale French Studies*, 1994, 86: 187-205.
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IV. Women Past and Present

Victoria's portraiture represents a pinnacle and a sum of royal femininity, but not, in a developmental sense, its progress. Although the collection of the Portrait Gallery as a whole was structured as a narrative of national progress, the relationship of Victoria's portrait to those of historic royal women did not represent her presence as a summary result of the past. Royal women throughout history - Victoria as well as her predecessors - occupied a position of distinction within the nation, and were fixed in the nineteenth-century constellation of Englishness as exemplars of English femininity, whether it was the ornamented femininity of state or the maternal femininity of family (or dynastic) life. Their portraits, and most notably portraits of Queen Victoria, function as polestars, rather than milestones, in the nineteenth-century collection of the National Portrait Gallery. Not always and completely exemplary as individuals, the portraits of royal women nevertheless set the abstract and ahistorical standards through which femininity in other women was expressed, and historically measured.

As exemplars, the features of royal women's portraiture indicate the most important themes of the nineteenth century National Portrait Gallery's collection of women's portraits. Taken as a group, the portraits of royal women embody all the most important signifiers in the entire collection, including dress and ornamentation; femininity as expressed by sexuality, reproductive or otherwise; and femininity as expressed by the virtues of family life and moral occupation. Most importantly, they signal the profound tension in the Portrait Gallery between national history and national ideals, expressed in the relationship between past and present. If the tension between tradition and modernity was glossed in the collection of royal women by the putative persistence of the monarchy, the series also lays the foundation for a historical narrative which culminates in an ideal present: the modern queen.

Royal women of all ages partook in some sense of a national feminine ideal; it is left to the portraits of other women to elaborate a narrative of developing English femininity. The progress of English femininity as a historical event is recorded in the collections of

beauties and authors, to which the following chapters turn. While their portraits refer to the same feminine qualities as the portraits of queens and royal women, both beauties and authors were represented as having had a changing historical status in national life. Using many of the same pictorial elements as those which appear in the portraits of queens to express ideas about women and femininity, the collections of portraits of beauties and authors arrange them differently and concentrate them in particular historical periods. The narrative inscribed in those arrangements describe a changing and changeable history of women in English life, one which begins in the distant past inhabited by beauties.

CHAPTER FOUR

BEAUTY AND BEAUTIES

In 1972, both Houses of Parliament debated the merits of passing an act outlawing discrimination on the grounds of sex. As a Select Committee heard evidence concerning the current state of women's economic and social status in Britain, the National Portrait Gallery mounted its first and only major exhibition of portraits of women. Titled 'The Masque of Beauty', the exhibition featured a historical series of portraits of celebrated beauties who lived between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries.¹ The printed catalogue of the same name is a lavish production, featuring plates interleaved with pencil illustrations which are die-cut to frame the sitters' faces. Each sitter's portrait is accompanied by some scant biographical details and quotes from contemporaries which testify to her beauty: the catalogue is designed to focus the reader's attention on the beautiful face of the sitter. In his introduction to the catalogue and exhibition, Roy Strong writes, 'every age is impelled to worship the beauty of that woman or those women who seem best to reflect its ideals of physical perfection', and as readers or viewers we are invited to do the same, retrospectively.²

Given that this exhibition and catalogue were produced during a time when women's social and political status were being hotly contested in an important national arena, its focus on physical beauty smacks of an evacuation of women from history, except as objects of an aesthetically appreciative gaze. The display of female beauty is not, and was not during the nineteenth century, a vacuous gesture of aesthetic mastery (or, for that matter, anything else). Art historical writing is now becoming attuned to the politics of representations of female beauty: a substantial body of work has productively undertaken questions about the political content of representations of women.³ This chapter develops an account of the functions of

¹The exhibition was held 5 July to 17 September 1972 at the National Portrait Gallery, St. Martin's Lane, London.

²Roy Strong, 'Introduction', *The Masque of Beauty*, exhibition catalogue, (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1972): 4.

³This chapter principally concerns the question of the relationship between signifier and signified of women's images, a relationship which has been of deep concern to feminist theorists; the most influential treatments of the subject has been Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock, 'Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature: A Study of the Representation of Elizabeth Siddall', *Art History*, June 1984, 7(2): 206-227. In that essay, the separation between the sign and signified is treated as a historical given; this chapter tries to historicise that process by suggesting that if that separation is always *possible*, at certain times and under certain historical conditions it becomes more *probable*.

beauties in the Portrait Gallery's early collection through two art historical perspectives: firstly in terms of the narrative structures they put into play in the collection, and secondly in terms of their function within hierarchies of artistic production and patronage. Together, these two approaches sketch a complex set of relations evoked by images of beautiful women.

Section I discusses the signifiers and signifieds of beauty in the middle part of the century, especially as it related to female sexuality. When it was founded as a curatorial category for the Portrait Gallery in the mid-nineteenth century, the word 'beauty' represented a catalogue of two centuries of women whose biographies and portraits which could usefully be deployed in the representation of history. Section II interprets the presence of those women in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery and outlines the contribution made by beauties to the Portrait Gallery's narrative of national history. The aesthetic connotations of the portraits, and the narratives created about their sitters through iconography and spatial relationships constructed within the gallery, were used to express ideas about women's sexuality and their appropriate relationships to men and to each other. The imaging of female sexuality in portraits of beauties contrasted both temporally and iconographically with the legitimate reproductive sexuality celebrated in the portraits of the queens. Neither a peripheral nor a superficial element of the collection, the 'beauties' imaged an essential problem of the past and present.

The narrative function of these portraits was, however, always at least shadowed by the value to the collection of their formal beauty. The problem of a contest between the aesthetic and the narrative functions in 'national' images of beautiful women surfaced as early as the 1840s, when the Fine Arts Commissioners deliberated on the decorations for the new Palace of Westminster. Three of the Commissioners, including Earl Stanhope (then Viscount Mahon) submitted letters on the subject of whether history painting was a suitable genre for the Houses of Parliament; the letters include passages which identify the potentially problematic relation between female beauty as an aesthetic imperative and the moral turpitude it

might signify.⁴ The sometimes contradictory relation between the denotative and connotative powers of beauty was managed carefully in the early history of the collection, with an eye to ensuring that the moral lessons of female 'beauty' were clearly inscribed.

Section III takes up the question of the beauty of beauties, and considers the circumstances under which they were read as aesthetic objects, and how that subsumed their narrative impact. In the late 1860s, when the nineteenth-century neo-classical school emerged as a force in the art world and in the National Portrait Gallery, the aestheticised and idealised images of beauties took on a new value. Like the nude, the beauty was the subject of a renewed interest in painting's capacity to aestheticise through abstraction. If the paintings of beauties did not as a result exactly lose their narrative connotations, their connotative power was eroded by their appreciation as 'pure' painted form. Testimony not to the values of the historical moment but to the skill of the painter, the functions of the portraits of beauties in the context of the Portrait Gallery's collection began to shift. The evident impact of these changes did not register in the collection numerically, probably in part because the renewed appreciation of beauties meant that their price exceeded the Portrait Gallery's acquisition budget. But this profoundly important change in the appreciation of images of women in the nineteenth century can nonetheless be charted in the National Portrait Gallery's acquisitions and signals the encroachment of modernity on the National Portrait Gallery.

I. Beauties in the mid-nineteenth century

One way of interpreting the economy of spectatorship mobilised by images of women is to see its processes of display and consumption as symbolising parallel events or economies in lived experience.⁵

⁴P.P. 1844, *Third Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts*, V. 31(585): appendices 8 through 12. Hallam fired the first shot, asserting that history painting required the female form for aesthetic reasons, and that 'all the most beautiful and interesting women in English history must be painted, if at all, on the scaffold'. Stanhope disagreed that they need be painted on the scaffold and gave a long list of possible subjects; he then concluded, 'where a Queen is introduced, there need be no lack in paintings any more than in reality of blooming Ladies of the Bedchamber and Maids of Honour to attend her'.

⁵Two works which are alert to these issues in the context of images of 'beauties' such as were included in the Portrait Gallery see Robert Jones, "Such Strange Unwonted Softness to Excuse": Judgement and Indulgence in Sir Joshua
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Situating the production and consumption of images of women within contemporary discourses of sexuality and consumption has been a productive area of criticism in studies of nineteenth-century imagery. has been to interpret representations of women in the context of the The imaged conflation of purchasing and sex which T. J. Clark influentially described as central themes of Manet's *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère* and *Olympia* was taken up by Peter Bailey in an article on the sexual politics of the display of the female body - specifically the body of the female barmaid - in nineteenth-century England.⁶ Bailey investigates the fascination of the barmaid's simultaneous display and unavailability, a dynamic produced by the newfangled architecture of the gin palace, a 'cultural prototype' of the modern form of 'glamour' captured by Manet in *Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*. He argues that what was being staged around the bar was 'parasexuality', which he defines as 'sexuality that is deployed but contained' in such a way as to be acknowledged and (literally) capitalised on, but without being disruptive. Painters like Thomas Lawrence, Peter Lely and John Hoppner arguably also captured the glamour of parasexuality in their portraits of the most 'admired' women of their generations.

If parasexuality is most easily identified (or most fascinating) in the representation of barmaids and prostitutes, it was not only working-class women who participated in the economy of parasexual exchange.⁷ Beauties of the kind represented in the Portrait Gallery were usually relieved of the necessity of paid labour (although suggestions of informal profit from sexual activity often lingered in the background of the image of the beauty), but were women whose (apparent) sexuality put them for some other reason into the public eye. A beauty was a woman whose sexuality was publicised, usually either because she was remarkably sexually attractive, or was on the

Reynolds's *Portrait of Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton and Argyll*", *Oxford Art Journal*, 1995, 18(1): 29-43 and Ann Bermingham's 'The Aesthetics of Ignorance: The Accomplished Woman in the Culture of Connoisseurship', *Oxford Art Journal*, 1993, 16(2): 3-20. For this period in England see also Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, morality and art*, (Manchester and New York: M.U.P., 1996) and Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

⁶T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), see especially chapters two and four. Peter Bailey, 'Parasexuality and Glamour: the Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype', *Gender and History*, Summer 1990, 2(2): 148-172.

threshold of entering into some recognisably sexual (social) relation: wife, mother, or outcast. As a category which was not categorical, beauty symbolised a non-specific female sexuality and served as a flexible icon around which to elaborate discourses of female sexuality. The beauty was the eroticised woman in the public eye who served as an exemplar of female sexuality.

Beauty and female sexuality were linked in nineteenth-century culture in various ways, not only on the grounds of women's behaviour but on the opportunities they presented for male fantasy about that behaviour. Scientific texts like Alexander Walker's *Beauty: Illustrated Chiefly by an Analysis and Classification of Beauty in Woman* (1836), accounted for female beauty as a reproductive tool designed to attract the male mating partner. Robyn Cooper observes that in Walker's text, 'the external beauty of woman is not simply an object of optical pleasure but a sign of reproductive fitness, of the superiority of her internal functions, and therefore of immense significance to human happiness and the progress of the species.'⁸ As in so many nineteenth century discourses of sex and gender, the sexuality of a woman's beauty was explained through biology, but Walker's discussion has a clear relationship with mundane social practices in which women's sexual respectability was associated with privacy and restriction. The attention and publicity attracted by beauty suggested a transgression of that respectable privacy: it has been suggested that for the nineteenth century actress 'her public exposure automatically linked her in the popular imagination with that other class of public women, prostitutes.'⁹ Behind the bar, on the stage, in a portrait shown at the Royal Academy or riding in Hyde Park, where a woman's beauty was open to male sexual appraisal she was made a sexualised figure.

The historiographical attention given to the nineteenth century's bourgeois moralism makes it easy to forget that there were elite women celebrated (and vilified) for their liminal sexuality and bold occupation of the public eye, and that their milieux - courts and court

⁸Robyn Cooper, 'Victorian Discourses on Women and Beauty: The Alexander Walker Texts', *Gender & History*, Spring 1993, 5(1):37.

⁹Michael Baker, *The Rise of the Victorian Actor*, (London: Croom Helm, 1978): 99. See also Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses As Working Women: their social identity in Victorian culture*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991) for a full discussion of these issues.

life - were still in some ways models of national life. Notable society beauties of the nineteenth century included Lady Blessington (1789-1849); the Countess Waldegrave (1821-79); Caroline Norton (1808-1871); and Lillie Langtry (1853-1929). Some of these women were not born to the high social position they eventually achieved, but rose quickly through the ranks once they had attracted attention from the top. The Prince of Wales, like many of his contemporaries in the 1860s and 70s, had a fascination for what one biographer delicately terms the pretty women of the 'demi-monde', which included the theatrical community. Sarah Bernhardt was one stage presence who received an *entrée* into society through a Princely infatuation, much to the chagrin of the more conservative members of that circle.¹⁰ Beauty solicited invitations, opened doors, and made introductions, sometimes to very powerful people in England's political establishment.

Having gained entrance to these circles, some beauties became powerful and influential figures within society, and capitalized on the fame of their charms to enter into more substantial arenas. Party political life was, at least until the 1867 Reform Act, managed through the more convivial kind of political party which relied on a charming and industrious hostess, and in spite of her anxious start in life Frances Waldegrave made a great success of managing the Liberals after the death of Lady Palmerston.¹¹ Caroline Norton, though not an influential hostess, held and encouraged strongly Whiggish views, and owed some of her fame to her close friendship with Lord Melbourne during his Prime Ministerial career. These and other careers could be built on social notore¹⁸ity, although the entry of 'beauties' into serious (or not so serious) enterprises was often received equivocally. Most of the beauties mentioned were published, if not very well-received, authors; one group of enthusiastic photographer's models became known disparagingly as 'the Professional Beauties', despised by some for their vanity and attention-seeking.¹² The label of beauty carried connotations both of exemplary feminine behaviour and of the temptations of excess: it

¹⁰V. Cowles, *Edward VII and His Circle*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1956): 144.

¹¹K.D. Reynolds, 'Politics without feminism: the Victorian political hostess', Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Wollstonecraft's Daughters. Womanhood in England and France 1780-1920*, (Manchester: M.U.P., 1995): 103.

¹²V. Cowles, *Edward VII and His Circle*: 153. Lillie Langtry describes her leading role as one the 'professional beauties' in her instructive autobiography, *The Days I Knew*, (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1925).

was a socially desirable quality to possess, but to exploit or exercise it in certain ways was dangerous. The ambiguity of the beauty was one of the problems, and attractions, of her representation.

Representations of nineteenth-century beauties were produced in a wide range of contexts. The ritual commissioning of portraits of great or minor beauties, particularly marriageable women, formed a socially important fraction of Royal Academy exhibitions throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, continuing a tradition established in the eighteenth century. Portraits of beauties were often engraved, and the engravings circulated as prints or in periodicals; following this tradition, later in the nineteenth century beauties became favourite subjects for photographers and postcards. A cohort of periodicals were veritably dedicated to the image of the beauty; titles like *La Belle Assemblée* and *Court Journal*, *Court Magazine*, *English Annual*, *Heath's Book of Beauty*, and the *Keepsake*, flourished during the second quarter of the nineteenth century on the labour of the women who were also a mainstay of their pages.¹³ The engravings of portraits and poetry which filled these publications, as well as autonomous novels and poetry, took beauties as their subjects: around the 1850s beauties begin to figure in novels that explicitly treated the subject of marriage and sexuality.¹⁴ An image made with bodies, paint, words or lines, the beauty was pervasive in several linked discursive fields.

The exemplary function of beauties is evident in the way that moral value was frequently attached to the image of the beauty. The use of the term beauty for a virtuous or exemplary instance was a convention that existed in writing on many subjects during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Books about natural and artistic subjects often described their subjects as beauties, using the term to

¹³*La Belle Assemblée* began publication in 1806; it was edited by Caroline Norton from 1832-36, when it was incorporated into the *Lady's Magazine*. Caroline Norton also edited the *English Annual* from 1834-38, and *Fisher's Drawing Room Scrapbook* from 1832-51. The *Keepsake* began publication in 1828 under the editorship of F.M. Reynolds, was edited by Lady E. Stuart Wortley in 1840, by Countess Blessington from 1841-50, and by Miss Power from 1851-57. Countess Blessington also edited *Heath's Book of Beauty* from 1834-47.

¹⁴An anonymous novel, *The Outsiders of Society or the Wild Beauties of London* (1866) deals exclusively with the kept women and their keepers who maintain the appearance of respectability; Maud Annesley's *The Dashing Girls of London or the Six Beauties of St. James'* (1865) follows six orphaned sisters as they negotiate a perilous route through family bankruptcy, courtship and marriage.

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refer to a particularly impressive part of the landscape, or to some specially emotive lines of poetry. Sometimes the categories overlapped, and a book on the beauties of some poet could refer to the women in his poetry, rather than to the verse. Sometimes the beauties were elected specifically on moral grounds: L.M. Stretch's *Beauties of History, or, Pictures of Virtues and Vice Drawn from Real Life* (1833), chronicles didactic episodes from history, ordered according to the alphabetical appearance of each virtue and vice. Particularly in fictional works, the figure of the beauty is used to figure the ethical behaviour of sexually available women, in terms of the virtuous and the vicious, the Madonna and the whore.¹⁵ In nineteenth-century language and image, the exemplary, the moral, the aesthetic and the sexual all adhered to the beauty.

In representations of the virtuous beauty, the sensual beauty of the women and their images was interpreted as expressing a moral or social beauty that emerged in their characters and their lives, as well as in their appearance. Excellent examples of this can be found in the beauty periodicals, which registered society women in a predictable pattern of virtuous womanhood.¹⁶ The frontispiece of *Heath's Book of Beauty* for 1837 is a portrait of the Marchioness of Abercorn and her child, engraved after Landseer, and a tributary verse titled 'Madonna'. The poem begins by describing a sensual or aesthetic experience of 'Madonna', but concludes:

The 'watchword' of thine ancient line
Shall best instruct thee in thy duty;
And prove its mighty spell *in thine* --
The spell of Virtue linked with Beauty.

¹⁵An operetta titled *The Rival Beauties* (1868) used precisely this formula in its narrative of two young women who switch identities in order to protect one of them from an unwanted marriage. One proves herself greedy and undeserving when she tries to capitalize on her 'new' identity in negotiating a marriage, and is suitably rewarded in the end with a base and coarse husband. The other, chaste in every possible way, weds the gallant young stranger. A strategic or deceitful deployment of sexual availability is constructed as vicious; in an honest and respectable offer of her sexuality a young woman shows her virtue. The opportunity is figured through beauty. John Pratt Wooler, *The Rival Beauties: An Operetta, in Two Acts*, Cromwell House, South Kensington, May 13, 1868.

¹⁶The Countess of Blessington's biographer comments of her editorial stance that 'no stauncher champion existed of the delicacy, dignity and orthodox morality of English womanhood', Michael Sadleir, *Blessington-D'Orsay: A Masquerade*, (London: Constable and Company, 1933): 61.

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'Madonna' follows the conventional verse form for these dedications, beginning with the beauty of the image, and finishing on a note of praise for the beauty of the character who is in verse, if not in portrait, usually imaged as wife and mother. In the case of 'Madonna', a particular point is made of ancestry, and the subject's contribution to the 'ancient line'. Personal beauty was thus explicitly linked with a woman's sexual and reproductive life, and her beautiful actions in those roles.

Where genuine beauty in the nineteenth century was associated with moral superiority and the fulfillment of the feminine obligations of matrimony and motherhood, false beauty was the earthly splendour which disappointed the moral expectations raised by its presence: it was described by one contemporary as 'the falseness and bitterness of gilded vice'.¹⁷ One of the ways which false beauty was distinguished and symbolised was by its dependence on artificial helps like jewels and costume.¹⁸ The women in *Heath's Book of Beauty* are generally shorn of all decoration except a few curls and a wedding band. One exception appears in the *Book of Beauty* for 1838, whose frontispiece is a portrait of the Countess of Chesterfield which shows her in a coronet, a jewelled bracelet, and with her be ringed hand fingering the multiple strings of pearls wound around her neck. The accompanying poem, written by her cousin Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley, attempts to treat between the Countess' 'heavenliness' and 'earthliness', obviously feeling that the earthly splendours of the portrait mitigate against conviction of the sitter's inward beauty. Material extravagance and greed was often understood to imply sexual appetite, and preoccupation with earthly treasures, including sexual pleasures, marked the vicious beauty.¹⁹

¹⁷W.H. Davenport Adams, *Famous Beauties and Historic Women*, (London: Charles J. Skeet, 1865): V. I, xii.

¹⁸The theme of the relationship between female sexuality and material desire was taken up by G.F. Watts in the *Wife of Plutus*, (1877-85, Walker Art Gallery). This oil painting represents a naked female torso, her head turned away in sleep or ecstasy and her hand buried in a pile of jewels and baubles. Watts intended the picture to suggest 'the disease of wealth, wealth only wallowed in to speak somewhat grossly'. Exhibit information panel, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.

¹⁹Mariana Valverde explores some the reasons for this in 'The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse', *Victorian Studies*, Winter 1989, 32(2): 169-88. Women's spending on their personal appearance was associated with deference to, and reflection on, their male provider, a matter first theorised by Thorstein Veblen in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, (New York: Macmillan, 1899), and handled with more subtlety by Erika Rappaport in "A Husband and His Wife's Dresses": Consumer Credit
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The beauties who succeeded on the stage and in society in the nineteenth century worked at the margins of respectable femininity. Defying the conventions of privacy which shrouded feminine sexuality within the marriage relationship, the visibility of their sexuality brought them accolades, approval and power which conventionally should not have been theirs. Lynda Nead writes about an interesting episode in the history of contemporary portraits of beauties which was occasioned by Landseer's *The Shrew Tamed*, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1861. The controversial image was understood to be a portrait of a well known prostitute, Catherine Walters or Skittles, and 'Seven Belgravian Mothers' wrote to the *Times* to complain:

Time was, Sir, when a Lawrence, and then a Grant, placed on the walls of the Royal Exhibition lovely pictures *each season of daughters* now first offered to the attention of England's fashionable world - pretty advertisements of our pretty, chaste wares. That day seems for ever gone.²⁰

The image of Skittles, in being hung on the Academy walls, was credited with an inappropriate significance when virtuous beauty ought to have been celebrated. It was within the margins of the kind of significance represented in turn by Skittles or England's 'pretty chaste wares' that the Portrait Gallery established its collection of beauties.

A Restoration beauty established the National Portrait Gallery's collection of women's portraits. The first acquisition of a woman's portrait was that of Elizabeth Hamilton, or 'La Belle Hamilton', later the Comtesse de Grammont (NPG 20, figure 22). The Trustees' decision to establish their female collection with Elizabeth Hamilton did not go unremarked: the *Saturday Review* felt that her 'virtue, wit, and beauty make her not unfit to head the distinguished Englishwomen in the gallery', whereas the *Art Journal's* critic was less

and Debtor Family in England, 1864-1914', in Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough, eds., *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, (London, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996): 163-187 and by Lori Ann Loeb in *Consuming Angels: Advertising and Victorian Women*, (Oxford and New York: O.U.P., 1994). See also Chapter 3, section I.

²⁰Quoted in Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*: 61.
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Figure 22. John Giles Eccardt after Sir Peter Lely, *Elizabeth Hamilton, Countess of Grammont* (1641 - 1708)
Canvas, ca. 1663, 76.2 x 66.2, NPG 20

welcoming to La Belle Hamilton, suggesting that 'the collection must contain portraits of female celebrities; but the selection in this direction is at least extraordinary as a beginning.'²¹ When the supply vote for the Portrait Gallery was presented to the House of Commons in 1858, Mr. Briscoe commented that the expenditure might be unwarranted, considering the weak claims of some of the sitters to be represented. La Belle Hamilton, he thought, 'a very pretty woman no doubt in her time, but he was not aware that it was of any national interest to preserve her portrait.'²² The collection of beauties did not strike everyone as consistent with the project of the National Portrait Gallery to represent the great figures of English history.

The appropriateness of forming a collection of beauties seems to have been a subject of disagreement amongst the Trustees as well. Earl Stanhope was familiar with and interested in 'beauties' past and present: the portrait of his own wife the Viscountess Mahon by J. Lucas was engraved for *Heath's Book of Beauty for 1839*, where it appeared accompanied by a dedication by Disraeli.²³ But if the 'beauty' was a natural part of Stanhope's landscape, other Trustees did not have the same priorities when it came to representing women in the collection: William Carpenter wrote in a letter to Scharf in 1863, 'I conclude our noble Chairman [Stanhope] did not feel the Mary Wollstonecraft a picture or person worthy of admittance to be hung in the same gallery with "la belle Hamilton". What gives her a claim to be seen there? If the Duchess of Portsmouth is to be hung I trust it may be with the face to the wall.'²⁴ The disagreements around whether it was appropriate to represent beauties in the collection reflect the ambiguity of what beauties symbolised. But this ambiguity was resolved by the Portrait Gallery through securing portraits and sitters which were clear in their moral lessons. The collection of beauties which was assembled by the Portrait Gallery

²¹*Saturday Review*, 27 March 1858: 312; *Art Journal*, 1858 N.S. Vol. 4: 55.

²²*Hansard*, 3d series, V. 151: col. 1422.

²³The print and poem appear on page 17. His own collection included another portrait by Lucas of his wife painted in 1846, and he is listed by Oliver Millar as the purchaser of a Lely of Elizabeth Butler, Countess of Chesterfield, wife of Philip Stanhope, 2nd Earl of Chesterfield, in *Sir Peter Lely, 1618-80* (London: NPG, 1978): 55. On 1 September 1858 he wrote to Scharf asking him to look out for some prints of English ladies 'as derived from the innumerable "Books of Beauty", "Courts of Queen Victoria" &c. that used to be published' for his 'Gallery' of contemporary prints.

²⁴William Carpenter to Scharf, 13 April 1863, Trustees Correspondence, NPG, London.

constructed a narrative which relegated unruly women to the past, hence affirming contemporary notions of appropriate female behaviour, while allowing for the recognition of some of the great (and notorious) female characters of English history.

II. The narrative of beauty

The collection of portraits of beauties was useful to the historical work of the National Portrait Gallery in various ways. When, later in the nineteenth century, the Trustees began to think of the Gallery as a collection of portraits, the beauties served an important function in representing the distinctive aesthetic of exemplary female portraits. During the early history of the Gallery they were, however, putatively collected for their historical evocations. These women were referred to widely in the historical literature used by the Trustees, particularly in the memoir-type writing they favoured: the presence of beauties was hence required for historical completeness. But the beauties were not complete. Beauties from several periods were excluded from the collection, and where they were present, the portraits of beauties worked to give a particular character to the representation of different periods. The parasexuality of the beauties, in its virtuous and vicious incarnations, was strategically deployed in the collection to colour different historical periods in different ways.

The success of this line of argument depends on the reader agreeing with the author's determination of which of the portraits in the National Portrait Gallery's collection were beauties (see Appendix 2-C). The description was only sometimes explicitly applied, for instance, the Duchesses of Devonshire and Queensberry were called beauties in both historical and contemporary literature. Other women whose reputations and lives were patterned as those of beauties were accorded the title of a more obvious occupation, actress (Nell Gwyn) or author (Caroline Norton). If the category is defined to encompass women whose lives reflected nineteenth-century descriptions of beauties - to include actresses and women who were known for their informal influence in high places rather than strictly for their physical beauty - the National Portrait Gallery collected twenty-seven portraits of twenty-four beauties between the years 1856 and 1899. This represents about one-fifth of the female

portraits collected during that period, a substantial fraction of the collection of women's portraits.

The gestures of historical interpretation made by the Trustees through the acquisition and hanging of beauties operated within the context of contemporary connotations of beauty as a trope for female sexuality and its associated power; and in the context of contemporary whiggish historical interpretation. Each portrait was acquired with consideration for its ability to convey a certain kind of female character within the conventions of contemporary representations of women. Displayed in the context of her contemporaries, the presence of any particular beauty could cast her character across the period. Given the strength of feeling which the nineteenth century viewed certain kinds of behaviour in women, the presence or absence of these images could be used in powerful ways to depict the nature of certain historical periods.

Of those twenty-seven portraits collected by the National Portrait Gallery during the nineteenth century, eight (about a third) were of women who lived during the period of the Restoration. Beauties figured significantly within nineteenth-century understanding of the Restoration, and in the Portrait Gallery's construction of that period. The Portrait Gallery's account of English history was structured by what is known as Whig history, in which English constitutional history is figured as a history of progress towards a Protestant constitutional monarchy. In this narrative, the period of the Stuart Restoration, which tended towards absolutism and worse - Catholicism - was interpreted as a period of regress. In the nineteenth century, one of the ways used to figure that regress was to emphasise it as a period of immorality and excess, as indexed by the behaviour of women. Macaulay's *History of England* (5 volumes, 1848-61) remarks of the Stuart courts that 'extravagant licentiousness...had produced its ordinary effect, the moral and intellectual degradation of women.'²⁵ Conveying that degradation

²⁵Lord Macaulay, *History of England to the Death of William III*, (1848-61) 4 volumes, (reprint, London: Heron Books, 1967), V. 1: 308. The idea that the status of women worked as an index of 'civilisation' was commonly held during and after the Enlightenment: see Jane Rendall, 'Introduction', William Alexander *History of Women, from the Earliest Antiquity to the Present Time*.....2 vols, 1781 (Bath: Thoemmes Press, 1994): v-xxvi, Kate Davies; 'Living Muses: The Politics of Embodiment 1750-1780', M.A., University of York, 1995. *Facing Femininities*: Chapter four p. 183

was one of the functions of the Portrait Gallery's collection of beauties.

The beauties of the Court of Charles II should have been familiar to the 'educated man' Stanhope hoped would visit the Gallery. *The Memoirs of Count Grammont* (1714), written by the Count's brother-in-law Anthony Hamilton, was popular reading material, and reprinted many times during the nineteenth century. Sir Walter Scott wrote in his preface to a new edition that Hamilton was 'superior to the indelicacy of the court, whose vices he has so agreeably depicted; and that superiority has sheltered such vices from more than half the oblivion which would now have for ever concealed them.'²⁶ The engravings accompanying this edition, which depict some of the more provocative scenes from the memoir, did not perhaps shelter the court's vices as much as Scott would have hoped, but probably contributed to the book's popularity. About half of the memoir is devoted to Grammont's years in the court of Charles II, and is almost entirely concerned with its sexual intrigues. One has little sense that any members of the court had concerns with any affairs of state, except as they pertained to love affairs: the King's negotiations with his mistress Barbara Villiers are rendered by Hamilton as a 'treaty' concluded by the King's 'ambassador' Grammont. Entertaining and accomplished, Hamilton's memoir also admirably represented a view of the reign of Charles II that accorded with a whiggish rendering of its role in English constitutional history.

The characters of women of the court were made familiar to the nineteenth century through this and other literary sources, and their images were also made familiar through a series of portraits, Sir Peter Lely's famous series of 'Windsor Beauties'. Anne Hyde, Duchess of York, had commissioned a series of portraits of the ladies of the court from Sir Peter Lely, which had remained in the Royal Collection. Occasionally adjusted to include or exclude different individuals, the portraits were then on view at Windsor, whose picture collection was open daily, for the consideration of a gratuity for the person who

²⁶Anthony Hamilton, *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, ed. with notes by Sir Walter Scott, (reprint London: John C. Nimmo, 1896): xviii. Translated from the French in 1714, this was republished throughout the nineteenth century in many editions with many variations of title, including Comte for Count and de Gramont for Grammont.

conducted the tour.²⁷ The pictures had also been made familiar through the publication of Mrs. Jameson's *Beauties of the Court of Charles II* (1833), which reproduced a collection of Restoration women's portraits in engravings, and gave accounts of each of the sitters' lives. The Portrait Gallery's collection of Restoration beauties was drawing on a fairly rich reserve of familiarity with its subjects.

Anna Jameson's re-presentation of the Windsor Beauties is forceful in its rendering of the women in the nineteenth-century currency of genuine and false, virtuous and vicious, beauty. She makes the point in her introduction to the *Beauties of the Court of Charles II* that the women represented there were not of a uniformly reprehensible morality: 'those who imagine that the Beautiful Women *condamnées à la célébrité* by the mischievous wit of De Grammont's Memoirs, were all *perdues de réputation*, may be pleased to find, that of one-and-twenty portraits in this collection, twelve are those of women as blameless as they were lovely.'²⁸ In building its collection of Restoration Beauties, the Portrait Gallery made the same gesture towards representing a certain kind of variety in moral character of the beauties. The Portrait Gallery collected only a fraction of the sitters included in Mrs. Jameson's collection, a fraction determined by both the fame (or ignominy) of the sitter, and the availability of a portrait that represented that sitter in a recognizably virtuous or vicious character.

The acquisition of a portrait of Louise de Kéroualle, the Duchess of Portsmouth, provides the clearest evidence of the Trustees' efforts to collect portraits which expressed in the visual language of the nineteenth century, the moral character of the sitter they sought to represent. The Duchess of Portsmouth was the infamous French mistress of Charles II, sent as a sort of gift from Louis XIV to Charles after he had taken notice of her in the Duchess of Orleans' Dover entourage. Nominally Catholic, and certainly French, Louise de Kéroualle was a clear figure of the continentalism as well as the

²⁷Anna Jameson, *A Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art In and Near London*, (London: John Murray, 1842): V. I, 222.

²⁸Jameson, *Beauties of the Court of Charles II*: vii. The twenty-one portraits refers to the collection of miniatures in the possession of Sir Gerard Noel; the original commission was for eight portraits; several portraits, including Nell Gwyn and Louise de Kéroualle, had been appended to the 'official' series of Windsor Beauties by Princess Charlotte, who evidently took an interest in the collection.

debauchery of the Restoration Court; known to have made the most considerable demands on the Privy Purse of all of Charles' many mistresses, she was the object of considerable contemporary as well as retrospective contempt for her extravagance and for her role in attaching Charles II to the French Court. French, but naturalized as English through Charles II's gift of an English title, Louise de K  roualle could bear the greatest weight of nineteenth-century disapprobation of the Restoration Court and its women.

A few months before the Trustees purchased a portrait of the Duchess of Portsmouth by Mignard, they were offered, at the nominal price of forty-five pounds, a portrait of her by Gascar. Scharf examined the portrait, sketching it in detail for the Trustees. It showed her in three quarter view, in an orange silk dress with a scarlet shawl, wearing pearls in her hair and on her ears, and holding a wreath of flowers against her knee. These are the conventional outlines of a female Restoration portrait, and the wreath is common in portraits once called (though not now identified as) the Duchess of Portsmouth.²⁹ This portrait, which seems to have met the general criteria for inclusion in the collection, was, however, rejected. Scharf commented in his notes on the picture that the image had 'eyeballs dark brown, no touch of light meretricious look whatever in them [sic].'³⁰ Meretricious, with its implications both of prostitution and material excess, seems a word designed to describe the vicious beauty, though the portrait did not. The Gascar portrait had failed to convey to the Trustees the moral character they attributed to the sitter, and was accordingly rejected.

The Trustees were satisfied by a portrait of the Duchess painted by Mignard, which they purchased six months later in July 1878 (NPG 497, figure 23). Whether the eyes in the Mignard painting showed her 'light meretricious look' is a question probably only Scharf could answer, but other elements of the painting create a showier, more decadent, and more explicitly and pathologically eroticised image for the Duchess of Portsmouth. The painting contains a number of symbols of the south seas, which may have been thought a helpful

²⁹Portraits of the Duchess of Portsmouth, reference collection, NPG, London.

³⁰George Scharf, *National Portrait Gallery: The Notebooks of Sir George Scharf (1820-95)*, (microfilm reprint London: World Microfilms Publications, 1978), T.S.B. 23: 8.



Figure 23. Pierre Mignard, *Louise de Kéroualle, Duchess of Portsmouth* (1649 - 1734)

Canvas, 1682, 120.7 x 95.3, NPG 497

reference to her foreignness. The Duchess is being presented with a pink and vaginal snail shell filled with pearls, and a piece of coral. These lavish offerings are positioned strategically against the Duchess' richly patterned and lustrous dress, which glows with a similarly exotic sheen. These elements of the portrait are painted with an attention to surface detail and a clarity which greatly exceeds that of the standard English Restoration portrait. If the 'meretricious' look is not in the eyes, it is certainly in the detailed representation of extravagant dress and ornament which dominates the picture. The relatively excessive attention given to ornament in the Duchess' portrait associated her beauty with the worldly and material sort associated with 'gilded vice', and worked to established the Duchess at the wrong end of the nineteenth-century dichotomy of beauty.

If the dress were not enough to discredit the Duchess in nineteenth-century eyes the inclusion of a second figure, a small black girl who is offering the shell and some coral to the Duchess, in the painting certainly would have. At the time this picture was acquired, a racial discourse which associated blackness with deviant sexuality, particularly deviant female sexuality, was developing.³¹ The presence of the black 'other' of feminine sexuality in the painting explicitly imaged the deviance of the Duchess' behaviour: the close embrace of the two figures, and the Duchess' own curly black hair and brown eyes would permit the connotations of the black female to 'colour' the image of the Duchess as other, sexually and racially. The relationship between the black child and the French Duchess might have been perceived as reflecting both on the Duchess' (illegitimate but Royal) progeny, and on herself: in the 1888 National Portrait Gallery catalogue, Scharf entered the quote from Evelyn's diary which records his disappointed impression of the Duchess: 'in my opinion of a childish, simple and baby face.'³² The references to immaturity and miscegenation work as much to discredit the sexuality of the Duchess as to invoke it.

The association of moral decadence with conspicuous consumption in the beauties continues in the portrait selected to represent Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland (NPG 387), acquired in 1874. Earl

³¹Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985): 76-108.

³²*Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts & c. in the National Portrait Gallery*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1888), V. 2: 363.

Stanhope considered himself to be 'rather a connoisseur' of portraits of this particular sitter, so presumably the choice of this image was well informed and deliberate.³³ In this painting after Lely, the Duchess appears in the guise of St. Catherine of Alexandria. Elaborate drapery, the saintly sword, and some very large, very visible pearls contribute to the excessive qualities that the Trustees no doubt wished the portrait to convey. The choice of the learned and relentlessly virtuous St. Catherine as a costume for one of the most notoriously manipulative, intriguing and demanding mistresses of the King seems rather an excessive compliment; but the extravagance of the portrait, as a metaphor and as an image, only heightens the irony.

The images of the virtuous beauties from the Court of Charles II were chosen to contrast visually with the likes of Portsmouth and Cleveland, insofar at least as it was possible for portraits from the same hand and intention to show contrast. One of the most reputable of the beauties was Elizabeth Hamilton, Comtesse de Grammont. As is suitable for a woman who was celebrated in the *Memoirs of Count Grammont* for playing practical jokes on women which mocked their vanity and extravagance, her portraits are relatively reserved.³⁴ The first acquired (NPG 20) was a bust portrait, in which very little of her rich draping is shown, a bare throat and shoulders taking up most of the surface of the portrait. Her hair curls over her forehead, but does not obscure her relatively lively eyes or sweet smile. The second portrait (NPG 509) is larger but devotes less of the canvas to the sitter, who is shown nearly full length in a delightfully arcadian setting, replete with waterfall and lamb. The sweet smile is gone, but there is now even more of her bare shoulders and throat to attract the viewer's attention, representing the Comtesse as Charles II described her after the birth of her (legitimate) children, when she had not, to his mind, regained her 'good shape'.³⁵ In the custom of the portraits of nineteenth-century beauties, the portraits of Elizabeth Hamilton represent the restrained deportment of a virtuous female sexuality, which La Belle Hamilton was believed to have devoted entirely to her marriage.

³³Stanhope wrote this of himself to Scharf on 29 November 1862, when he sent him to see a portrait of Gwyn being offered as a gift by Lord Spencer. Trustees Correspondence, NPG, London.

³⁴Hamilton, *Memoirs of Count Grammont*: 141-153.

³⁵From a letter from Charles II to the Duchess of Orleans, quoted in the 22nd Annual Report of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, and in the 1888 *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue*.

In what was, for the nineteenth century, a curious interpretation of female virtue, the portrait of Nell Gwyn was likewise selected for its depiction of a sprightly feminine beauty. Although Nell Gwyn worked both as an actress and as mistress to Charles II, she was favourably remembered for retaining her earthy Englishness even in the context of a frenchified and dissolute court. A devoted lover of Charles II, she gained even more favour through comparison to the Duchess of Portsmouth, her chief rival, whom she evidently strongly resembled. Mistaken for Portsmouth by an unruly mob, she is said to have shouted from her carriage, 'pray, good people, be civil; I am the Protestant whore.'³⁶ The anecdote nicely summarizes many aspects of her appeal. Although her relationship with the King evidently transgressed the boundaries of conventional nineteenth century morality, because it was reputed to be monogamous at least on her side it represented a tremendous moral improvement on her former occupation as orange girl and compared favourably with the more dissolute behaviour of other women at court.

The portrait of Nell Gwyn by Lely acquired early in the Portrait Gallery's career (NPG 36) depicts a relatively demure figure, holding her arm in front of her body in a gesture of playful defensiveness or withdrawal.³⁷ Like La Belle Hamilton, the Gwyn portrait shows us a young woman smiling shyly in an idealised arcadian landscape, her beautiful throat, shoulders, and head as unsullied as the setting by artificial ornamentation. Exposed skin as testimony to sexual authenticity or innocence has particular resonance in portraits of Nell Gwyn - since many of them, including the one now exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery (NPG 2496), refer to her famously 'slatternly' dress by showing her with at least one breast exposed. A portrait of her in a state of undress was examined by the National Portrait Gallery officials in 1859, and was described by one of the Trustees as one which when shown in the the presence of the owner

³⁶*Dictionary of National Biography*.

³⁷This portrait was identified as Catherine Sedley, Countess of Dorchester, sometime in the mid-twentieth century. A portrait called at the time of its purchase Mary Davis by Lely (NPG 253), another actress raised to fame by attentions from King Charles II, depicts her making a similar gesture, as does the portrait of actress Anne Oldfield (NPG 431) by Richardson; the arm held in front of the body may have been thought to be a theatrical gesture.

(a lady) 'you will surely blush to look at'.³⁸ That visitors in mixed company might be embarrassed by such an image did not deter the Gallery from acquiring in 1867 a portrait of Nell Gwyn with one nipple exposed. This portrait (NPG 230, figure 24) repeats the setting and themes of the later portrait of Hamilton, showing her stroking the head of a lamb in an arcadian landscape.³⁹ In keeping with the theme of uncontrived and unornamented beauty, her dress is simple robes and her hair draped loosely on her shoulders. Although her look is seductive and her pose eroticised, compared with Gascar's image of her rival, Nell Gwyn's portrait represents the virtues of reserve and restraint.

These, and other portraits of Restoration beauties were selected within a set of visual criteria designed to describe the virtuous or vicious use made by these women of their beauty. Individually, each suggests through pose, dress, and ornamentation the unique characters of the women they represent. But in the context of the collection, the portraits had an effect which transcended their sitter's individual virtues and vices. In 1871, there were just forty female portraits in a collection of more than three hundred, representing five hundred years of English history. Nine - nearly one-quarter of those female portraits - were concentrated in one section of a gallery which was itself divided into nine spaces. In 1885, fifteen of ninety-seven female portraits were crowded onto two of forty-four display walls. It was in the spaces displaying Stuart portraits that the female portraits were concentrated disproportionately within the collection. Given the nature of female portraiture of the period, which was highly sensual, the concentration of female portraits in that one area cast a visual image of the court's debauchery by which it was chiefly remembered, and by which it was consigned to the historical dustbin reserved for periods which failed to conform to the English commitment to Protestantism and Parliament.

³⁸William Smith to George Scharf, 18 May 1859, Trustees correspondence, NPG, London.

³⁹The arcadian settings may have been thought to connote innocence or simplicity suitable for virtuous beauties; their effect is also discussed in section III below. This portrait, although considered 'superior in artistic merit and unquestionable in point of authenticity' by the Board at the time of its purchase on 7 February 1867, was de-accessioned in 1900 due to its poor state of repair.



Figure 24. After Sir Peter Lely, *Nell Gwyn* (1650-87)
date and dimensions unknown, private collection (?), ex-collection
NPG, 230, illustration courtesy NPG

A degree of interpretive fervour seems to have overcome strict adherence to historical authenticity in the way that the beauties were represented. While portraits, sometimes more than one of each sitter, of Restoration beauties were enthusiastically acquired, other periods were granted less than their full complement of beauties. The Trustees took particular care to avoid tarring the recent past with the beautiful brushworks of impropriety. Their responses to offers of portraits of the actress Mrs. Jordan are particularly revealing in this respect. In addition to having had a long and successful career on the stage, Mrs. Jordan also had a long and similarly prolific career as mistress to the Duke of Clarence, subsequently William IV. The mother of ten of his children (the Fitzclarence family) as well as three others, she was in that one respect at least a likely heroine of the bourgeois Victorian family. She died in suspiciously reduced circumstances, a condition which during the middle years of the nineteenth century was attributed to the spendthrift habits of the Duke, who was reputed to have lived extravagantly on her income.⁴⁰ Mrs. Jordan's portrait was offered to the gallery twice in 1858, in 1859, in 1866, 1870, 1872 and again in 1893.⁴¹ Evidently a great favourite with collectors and aficionados, every offer of her portrait was declined by the Trustees: on the occasion of the first offer, the Chair wrote to the Secretary that 'Mrs Jordan is not I think of sufficient importance for us, and would give rise to some unpleasant points of remark connected with the late King.'⁴² Too close to the bone of the present, the 'beauties' of the late Georgian courts did not make an appearance in the Portrait Gallery's nineteenth century collection.⁴³

If the collection of beauties primarily concerned the reputations of kings, some of it also concerned the reputations of Queen Anne and Queen Victoria. The implications of the propriety and impropriety of these beauties' behaviour did not mobilise references to actual sexual relationships, but to non-sexual relationships which involved

⁴⁰See for instance, *The Public and Private Life of Mrs Jordan*, (London: J. Duncombe, 1832). A more objective and scholarly biography has been published by Claire Tomalin, *Mrs. Jordan's Profession*, (London: Viking, 1994).

⁴¹See Secretary's correspondence for 1858 and 1859, and records of offers for Trustees Meetings 14 June 1866; 28 April 1870; 19 April 1872; and 23 November 1893, NPG, London.

⁴²Stanhope to Scharf, 18 August 1858, Trustees' Correspondence, NPG, London.

⁴³The interested reader should also consult Chapter five, section II on this matter, which bears also on the Portrait Gallery's collection of authors.

questions of gender and authority. In a study of the nineteenth century Thomas Laqueur has observed that the sexual relation is also importantly a social relation, that 'the body's sexuality also haunts society'.⁴⁴ What was at stake in women's sexual behaviour - in one sense their deference to male authority and interest - could also be problematic in non-sexual relationships where the hierarchies of gender were concerned. The beauties who were famous for their friendship and attachment to a female monarch were of especial interest because of the nineteenth century's own reigning queen, whose own authority, as described in Chapter three, was importantly premised on her own conformity to patriarchal gender roles.⁴⁵ Queens' courts, as well as those of kings, were sites for the demonstration of appropriate gender roles.

Like the Restoration, the reign of Queen Anne was an area of the Gallery which was dominated by female portraiture. This was not of the exotically sensuous type characteristic of the reign of Charles II, but still managed to be suggestive of sexual tension if not sexual activity. The portrait (thought to be) of the Duchess of Marlborough, purchased in 1884 (NPG 712, figure 25) is a bust-length portrait by Kneller.⁴⁶ It is of plain composition and background; a scarf in the hair and a draped collar around the neck of the sitter are the portrait's only ornamentation. The Duchess' head is turned slightly and gives the impression of being drawn back, so that her eyes are turned sideways to regard the viewer. This disposition of her head, which is typical but not exclusive in her iconography, may have been interpreted as showing a haughty condescension consistent with the bad character with which she was frequently attributed. A similar expression is represented in the portrait of Anne Churchill, Countess of Sunderland, acquired in 1888 (NPG 803). These women, whose alliances worked as substantial influences on the monarch and her reign, are represented with gestures and expressions which suggest an intimidating imperiousness: their portraits were hung together to create a feminised image for the distant and (according to some) unsuccessful reign of Queen Anne.

⁴⁴Thomas Laqueur, 'The Social Evil, the Solitary Vice and Pouring Tea', *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, Vol. 3: 335-342. See also his book, *Making Sex*, (London and Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1990).

⁴⁵See Chapter three, section III above.

⁴⁶The sitter for this portrait is now unidentified.



Figure 25. Michael Dahl, *called Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough* (1660-1744)

Canvas, ca. 1695-1700, 74.9 x 62.9, NPG 712

The triple alliance of the Duchess of Marlborough, Anne Sunderland and Queen Anne was construed as an inappropriate one through the gender roles played by the various women and their consorts. Marlborough was the most infamous of the powerful women who advised Queen Anne: friends from their early childhood, their correspondence and companionship continued well into their adulthood, after Sarah Jennings was married to John Churchill, later first Duke of Marlborough. When Princess Anne succeeded to the throne at the age of thirty-seven, her long established favourites continued to be influential in her life - especially in the absence of a helpmeet in her consort. Earl Stanhope's *History of England 1701-1713* (1870) says of Anne's husband that 'little was expected of Prince George by any portion of the public, but even that little was more than he performed.'⁴⁷

In Stanhope's history, and in the Portrait Gallery, the reign is constructed as problematically feminised. Not content to unman the Prince, Stanhope also belittles the Queen's abilities, except to give her credit for her family life, and to say that 'in her intimacy with others...she was most warmhearted...scarce any person ever endured more for a friend - or from a friend.'⁴⁸ The Duchess is discussed by Stanhope infrequently, and then in slightly malicious terms, as a bad influence on the Queen or her heroic husband the Duke (who features as the masculine hero of the reign). The Duchess is often referred to her pseudonym 'Mrs. Freeman', under which she corresponded with the Queen in the guise of 'Mrs. Morley', as if to cast their correspondence as foolish or inconsequential since it was conducted in pet names rather than correct titles. As her most influential advisor, the Duchess of Marlborough usurped the role that would most appropriately have been occupied by the Queen's Consort.

The apparently inappropriate roles that women and men occupied in the court of Queen Anne were literally mapped onto the wall of the Portrait Gallery. In 1885, George's portrait was relegated to the bottom right hand corner of the wall hung with Queen Anne's portrait, whose image was instead framed on either side with portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough. Anne Churchill is also represented there, but her husband (the third Earl of

⁴⁷Earl Stanhope, *History of England 1710-13*, (London: John Murray, 1870): 46.

⁴⁸Stanhope, *History of England 1710-13*: 37.

Sunderland), whose political affiliations were regarded as a source of political discord in the menage of the Queen, is not represented in the collection. In an inversion of patriarchal gender roles, beauty literally surmounted the Prince, and the wife eclipsed the husband. Spatially and iconographically, the gender roles emphasized by the Gallery's representation of Queen Anne, her court's beauties, and their husbands were unfamiliar, alienated and - like the beauties of the Court of Charles II, relegated to the distant past.

By contrast, the representation of women in the court of Queen Victoria was emphatically consistent with the conventions of patriarchal authority. It was only later in the nineteenth century that the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery developed an interest in some of the women who had been influential during the early part of Victoria's reign. One was Caroline Norton, whose infamous marital crises had been famously linked to the high politics and politicians of the day, notably Victoria's earliest and most influential Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne.⁴⁹ The other was the Duchess of Sutherland, Lady of the Bedchamber and main bone of contention between the Queen and Sir Robert Peel during the Bedchamber crisis.⁵⁰ The Duchess had also been the Queen's sole companion during the first weeks of her widowhood. Their close, and potentially political, relationship might therefore have been construed as a similarly, and potentially, dangerous relationship such as that which existed between the Duchess of Marlborough to Queen Anne, but its representation in the National Portrait Gallery attributed it with different connotations.

The court of Queen Victoria, and its female members, were portrayed very differently from that of Queen Anne. The portraits of both the Duchess and Caroline Norton were gifts from the artist (or

⁴⁹See Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments*, (London: Virago, 1989), Chapter 3.

⁵⁰A stubborn attachment to the Duchess of Sutherland, principal Whig Lady of the Bedchamber, had caused Sir Robert Peel to withdraw from the Prime Ministership after Melbourne's resignation in 1839, due to what was interpreted as a lack of Royal confidence. Victoria's interruption of the ordinary course of Parliamentary politics was regarded with hostility and distrust, and raised fears which clearly concerned the gendering of political authority. The episode has been described as anxiety over 'a petticoat "camarilla", as existed in Portugal and Spain - where there were also young female monarchs - and as had existed in England in the reign of Queen Anne.' Peter Richard Williams, 'Public Discussion of the British Monarchy, 1837-1887' (PhD, Cambridge, 1988): 91.

his widow), thus not actively sought by the Gallery. Both were plaster copies of marble busts, and so not displayed with the care and pride of some of the great original work held by the Portrait Gallery. By the time the Portrait Gallery collected these images, most of its busts were displayed separately in the entrance hallways of the gallery, in the context of each other rather than the gallery as a whole. In medium and form of display these images contrast considerably with the beauties of either the Restoration or the reign of Queen Anne. Detached from sexualised bodies, static, and uniformly white rather than highly coloured, these portraits suggest none of the sensuality of the large oil portraits which predominate in the collection.⁵¹ The format and medium of these images serve to dissociate them from the problematic female roles which distinguish the collection of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century beauties.

The collection of beauties was thus themed strongly by the historiographical values of the Trustees, and constructed a history of English femininity which was consistent with its resolution in patriarchy. Working within the constraints of a nineteenth-century conception of beauty, one which exposed (and occluded) certain kinds of female sexual and political activity, the Portrait Gallery sought out portraits of women who had famously and importantly exercised an influence on history, or at least served as exemplary figures in the construction of feminine roles expressed by the category 'beauty'. Not only were portraits of individual women chosen for their ability to depict the historical character and suggest the nature of her actions, but the whole of the collection was developed and hung in accord with nineteenth-century notions of particular historical periods. Not merely the prettiest faces, the beauties represent fully expressed historical characters whose lives shaped, and were used to shape, the progress of English history.

III. From noun to adjective

Unpacking the connotations of the individual lives and portraits of beauties elucidates their narrative functions in the Portrait Gallery, but another set of questions also emerge in relation to these images. Feminist art historians have posed a set of questions about what

⁵¹Alison Smith discusses the sensual connotations of colour in *The Victorian Nude*: 121-32.
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interests, and what purposes, images of women served in the context their production (and consumption) as art objects. Beauty was an important category for describing women, but it was also an important aesthetic category, one used for describing paintings. In this sense, the function of 'beauties' within the genre of portraiture is parallel to the function of the female nude within other kinds of figure painting. In this interpretive context, the beauty of the image is perceived as a consequence not of the sitter's beauty, but of the way the image is idealised and regularised through the omission of certain features or processes associated with the female body.⁵² The agency of this process can be attributed to the beautiful sitter, but in this context was more often accorded to the power of the artist.⁵³ The power of beauties to suggest aesthetic pleasure, read as evidence of masculine artistic performance, was another context in which the Portrait Gallery's collection of beauties was developed.

A degree of idealisation has always been a feature particularly of female portraiture, more or less, in different ways, according to the fashion. During the Regency painters like Lawrence and Landseer engaged quite freely with the idealising and classicising conventions of female portraiture exemplified by Sir Peter Lely. In the mid-nineteenth century this kind of beauty portrait went out of fashion in favour of a naturalism which attempted a nearness of resemblance to the sitter in feature of face, body, setting and dress. Yet an idealising quality continued to be part of female portraiture: Dante Gabriel

⁵²The collection of beauties responds to the kinds of analysis which Lynda Nead has used to describe the representation of female sexuality in *The Female Nude*, and which feminist artists practicing since the 1970s have used to challenge the conventional representation of the female body and its sexuality: these textual and visual analyses focus on the ways that images of feminine sexuality are controlled through idealization of the female body; her opening analysis of the nude in Western art (17-25) makes most sense in relation to her section on contemporary artists (60-70); see also Lisa Tickner, 'Female Sexuality and Women Artists since 1970', *Art History*, 1978 1(2): 236-251; and Whitney Chadwick on the imaging of controlled female sexuality in 'The Fine Art of Gentling: horses, women and Rosa Bonheur in Victorian England', *The Body Imaged*, eds. Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1993): 89-109.

⁵³The gendered power relations between artist, sitter, and image are the principal concern of Deborah Cherry and Griselda Pollock, 'Woman as Sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature: A Study of the Representation of Elizabeth Siddall' and Marcia Pointon, 'Reading the body: historiography and the case of the female nude', in *Naked Authority: The Body in Western Painting 1830-1908*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 11-34; The subject gets an excellent treatment in Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'In Venus' Train', *Problem Pictures: Women and Men in Victorian Painting*, (Aldershot: Scolar, 1995): 139-158.

Rossetti's (1828-82) paintings of women, notable for a degree of individuation which made their sitters recognisable, adhere to an version of female beauty which is, in its repetition, recognisably an ideal; in the later-nineteenth century, John Everett Millais painted portraits of women which represented the distinctiveness of their faces but capitalised on and elaborated the decoration of the sitters' dresses to create portraits which are generally lighter, more painterly and florid than his portraits of men.⁵⁴ In mainstream art criticism, 'simplicity and grace' (simplicity, at least, implying a degree of generalisation) were thought appropriate for ladies' portraits; intelligence and thoughtfulness (which required furrowed brows rather than smoothed cheeks) were reserved for gentlemen.⁵⁵ Francis Grant's 1856 Royal Academy exhibit titled *The Countess of Dulcie* was chastised by the *Art Journal* because 'the features are characterised by too much severity.'⁵⁶ Soft focus was the convention for female portraiture even during the period of British painting which was arguably the most enamoured of realism.

The paintings of the beauties collected by the National Portrait Gallery during the nineteenth century exhibit a range of representational attributes whose function could be characterised as that of abstracting or idealising their sitters. The exception to this rule is in the representation of clothing: most of the sitters appear in period dress, as allegorical or costumed portraits were considered antithetical to the enterprise of the Gallery.⁵⁷ That being said, at

⁵⁴See for example Andrea Rose, *Pre-Raphaelite Portraits*, (Somerset: Oxford Illustrated Press, 1981). Apart from the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, nineteenth-century women's portraits are dolefully understudied, with the welcome and recent exception of Kate Flint's contribution to Peter Funnell, Malcolm Warner, Kate Flint, H.C.G. Matthew, Leonée Ormond *Millais: Portraits*, (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1999), which deals with Millais' later, as well as earlier, works.

⁵⁵ A reading of the *Art Journal*'s review of the portraiture of any Royal Academy exhibition during this period will reveal the gendered standards of 'likeness' in portraiture. On the variability of standards of 'likeness' see Part III, 'Likeness and identity' in Joanna Woodall, ed., *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997); Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, (London: Reaktion Books, 1991); and Nadia Tscherny, 'Likeness in Early Romantic Portraiture', *Art Journal*, Fall 1987, 46(3): 193-99.

⁵⁶*Art Journal*, 1856: 163.

⁵⁷Gill Perry's "'The British Sappho': Borrowed Identities and Women Artists in late Eighteenth-Century British Art", *Oxford Art Journal*, 1995 18(1): 45-57 deals with the use of allegory in the portraiture of women artists; this was not, however, a style of representation which entered the National Portrait Gallery. It was recorded in the minutes of the Trustees' meeting of 17 December 1888

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least one of the portraits shows its sitter in dress which led it to be described by the Portrait Gallery as 'the Duchess of Queensberry as a milkmaid' (NPG 238), and the dress of beauties is frequently unstructured and draped in a classicising fashion. The backgrounds to the portraits either contain almost no discernable features, or are arcadian, with classical landscape in the distant background and architectural features and drapery in the foreground. These features do nothing to locate the sitter in a particular time or place: given the references to renaissance classicizing, they might in fact be said to resist any kind of meaningful historicisation, associating the sitters with a tradition rather than an epoch.

If the settings do little to elaborate the historical contexts of the sitters, the degree of generalization in the faces serves even more to resist individuation. Skins are smooth, cheeks for the most part rouged, hair is off the face. Big eyes, most with heavy lids, are prevalent, and usually confront the viewer with a direct and frank exposure. Most of the women show expanses of bare skin, displayed in languorous, relaxed and open poses. Compared to mid-nineteenth century portraits of women which usually showed them in recognisably contemporary domestic interiors and fully clothed, the portraits of the 'beauties' seem to have more in common with contemporary academic nudes than with contemporary academic portraits. The idealising and de-historicising conventions normally associated with painting the nude were inscribed in the portraits of beauties collected by the Portrait Gallery in the nineteenth century.

The aesthetic of academic nudes has been described as a manner of representing women which was intended to be - literally - consumed by the male viewer or connoisseur.⁵⁸ Two portraits suggest the strength of this connoisseurial aesthetic within the gallery's collection of beauties. Both were acquired in the Gallery's first quarter century, and while each had her claims to a more active historical significance,

that 'portraits of persons disguised in theatrical costumes do not accord with the objects of this Gallery'.

⁵⁸Ann Bermingham, 'The Aesthetics of Ignorance: The Accomplished Woman in the Culture of Connoisseurship'. The sexual consumability of women's portrait images from the mid-nineteenth century is the subject of Griselda Pollock's 'Woman as sign: psychoanalytic readings', *Vision and Difference: Femininity, feminism and histories of art*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1988): 120-154. See also Lynda Nead, *The Female Nude*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

both sitters were known chiefly for the ways in which they posed their own figures for aesthetic consumption. One is Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensberry, whose personal beauty was remarked on by her contemporaries well into her old age. She was also known for her several eccentricities, one of which was to wear the fashions of her youth throughout her lifetime, making her a distinctive figure in society. Her portrait by Charles Jervas (NPG 238, figure 26) shows her as a doe-eyed milkmaid in a field with a group of cattle. No ordinary setting for an eighteenth-century Duchess, the portrait speaks plainly to its own status as an aesthetic production and to the aestheticising of the woman it depicts.

Another salient acquisition in this context was the portrait by Romney of Emma Lady Hamilton (NPG 294, figure 27). Lady Hamilton was perhaps most famous for being the mistress of the great naval commander Nelson, and their relationship was acknowledged in the National Portrait Gallery by hanging her portrait directly beneath his.⁵⁹ But the portrait hung there seems to refer to another episode or aspect of her biography which was prominent in nineteenth-century discussions of her life, and which emphasised her status as an object of aesthetic appreciation or connoisseurship - her status as a beauty. One of the few portraits of beauties which shows its sitter with averted eyes, she leans forward on one elbow displaying both her hands beneath her chin. A book rests open before her on the table to explain the gesture, but almost no daily activity could produce such a contortion: it certainly refers to her infamous 'attitudes', a kind of one-woman *tableau vivant* in which she adopted poses which illustrated emotions or thoughts, frequently drawn from classical sculpture. When Sir William Hamilton married Emma Lyon, it was said by one contemporary that 'Sir William has actually married his gallery of statues',⁶⁰ a statement which, like her portrait, constructed her as an object of connoisseurial consumption.

Emma Hamilton was made famous firstly by sitting for a series of portraits which were painted by Romney for the sheer pleasure of it, and of which the Portrait Gallery's acquisition was one. Regarded by

⁵⁹See Scharf's sketches of the South Kensington hangs, NPG, London.

⁶⁰Horace Walpole, quoted in Bermingham, 'The Aesthetics of Ignorance': 16.
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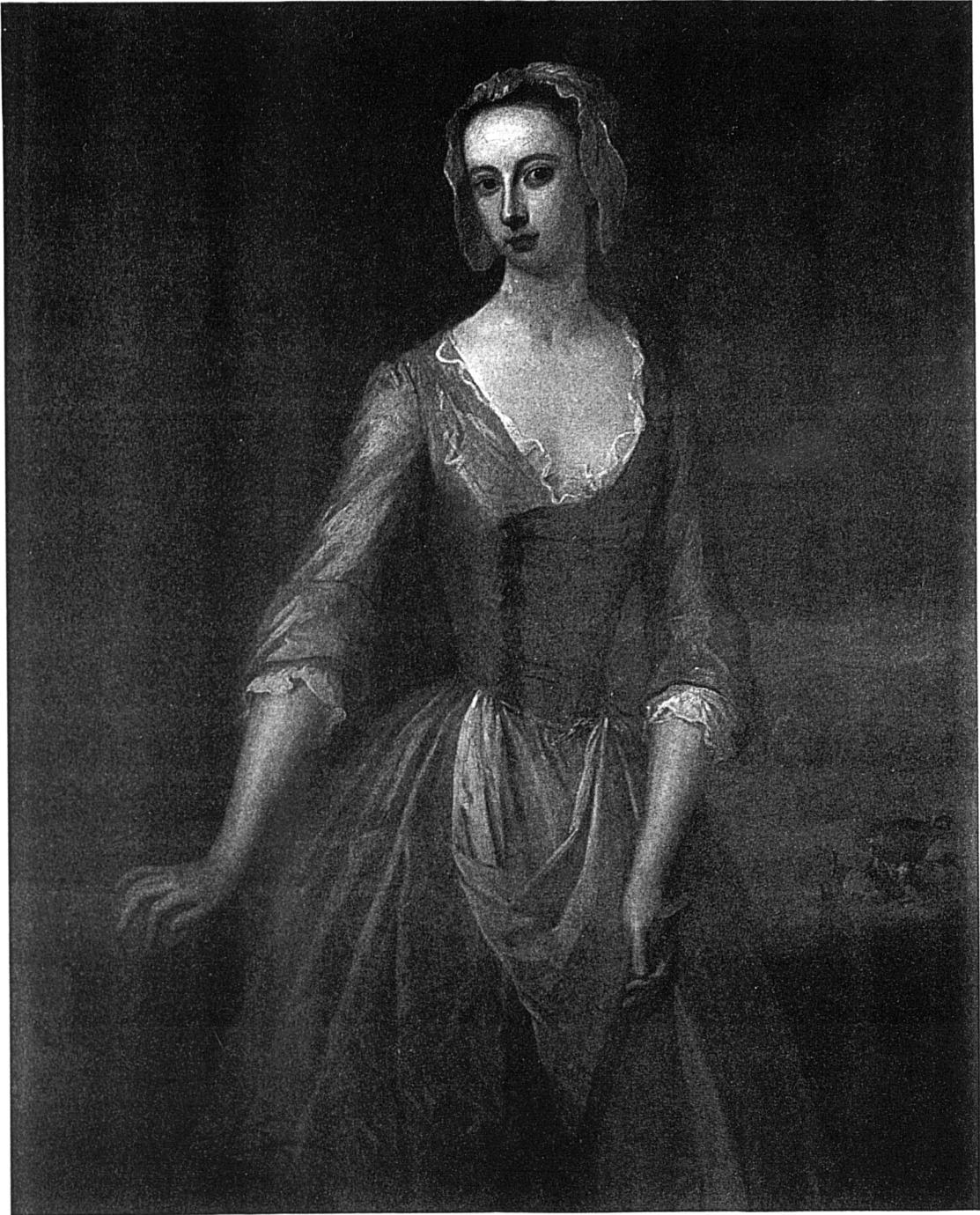


Figure 26. Attributed to Charles Jervas, *Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensberry* (1700-1777)
Canvas, date unknown, 127 x 101, NPG 238

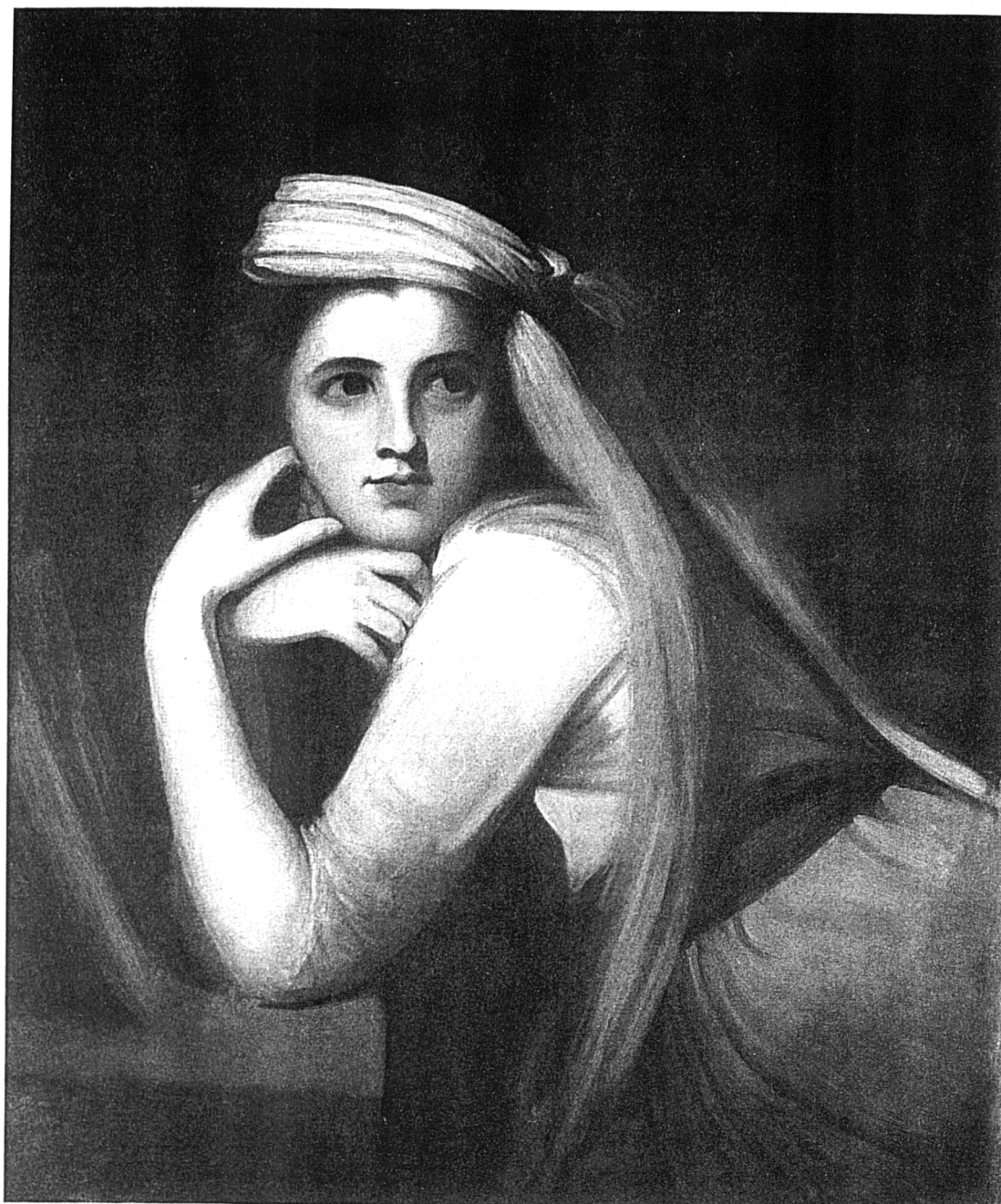


Figure 27. George Romney, *Emma, Lady Hamilton* (1765 - 1815)
Canvas, ca. 1785, 73.7 x 59.7, NPG 294

one connoisseur (and NPG Trustee) as the works which 'revealed the power within him,'⁶¹ the painting could be seen either as a likeness of a woman displaying her personal beauty, or as evidence of an artist's command of the beautiful. It was increasingly the case in the second half of the nineteenth century that the language of female beauty was appropriated to the connoisseurship of art, rather than the connoisseurship of women. Books like *Notable Women of Our Own Times: A Collection of Biographies of Royal and Other Ladies Celebrated in Literature, Art and Society* (1883) or *Men and Women of the Day: A Picture Gallery of Contemporary Portraiture* (1889) collected portrait images of significant female contemporaries as an illustration to their biography continued to be published; however these seldom used the language of beauty and were illustrated with photographs rather than engravings after portrait paintings.⁶² Books about historical beauties also continued to be published, with titles like *Beautiful Women* (1870) and *Bygone Beauties* (1883) which suggest that women are the works' subject. But in fact, these texts were primarily about the beautiful portraits which they illustrated. The trope of the beautiful woman was mobilized in these publications to help confirm the aesthetic valuation of the artist's ability to paint beautifully, and beauty became the privilege of art rather than of women.

When idealisation and aestheticisation returned to fashion in British art with the rise of the Victorian neo-classicists in the late 1860s, images of women were well-positioned to become the locus for proving the artist's craft. Already the site of formal aestheticisation and idealisation, the female nude/portrait was heralded (again) as a neutral form through which the artists' mastery of representation could be expressed.⁶³ In the face of flourishing industrial production

⁶¹Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, *George Romney*, (London: Duckworth and Co., 1904): 36.

⁶²While paintings of women were susceptible to construction which did not refer to the sitter, photography was not regarded as a fine art during this period and hence not subject to the same revision. The use of photographs in revival 'books of beauty' late in the nineteenth century (discussed in the conclusion to this chapter) is instructive in this regard.

⁶³Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude*: 99-162. The renewed fashion for painting the nude was neither unproblematic nor totalising: the moral language used to protest against the revival of the nude (and sometimes to praise it) reveals that the protest recognised the sexual dynamics of paintings of the nude and the engagement between artist and model which produced them. See Smith, pp. esp. 116-138. Issues around sexuality and art during this period surface especially in debates over women's artistic training: see Deborah Cherry in *Facing Femininities*: Chapter four

and changing forms of patronage, artists were developing new social constructions of their work and new economic roles for their produce.⁶⁴ The strategies they chose to accomplish these ends can be seen to have (literally) capitalised on the female image as it related primarily to commodity culture rather than sexual discourse. Femininity and consumption, especially commodity consumption, were already linked: a female image on the surface of a canvas announced its status as a commodity, an object for economic exchange in the burgeoning trade in contemporary art.⁶⁵ Attesting to the object's consumability, the female image became an important figure for the artist's commercial repertoire, when success in the increasingly depersonalised marketplace was the key to acquiring wealth-based status now available to the artist.

The painter of the commodified female image announced himself the master of that object, it being the other to his individual, romantic, masculine genius. This accomplished two important objects:

Painting Women, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993): 53-64 and Sarah M. Dodd, 'Art Education for Women in the 1860s: a decade of debate' in Clarissa Campbell Orr, ed., *Women in the Victorian Art World*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995): 187-200.

⁶⁴The same can be said for art critics, whose developing specialist language would also have played a role in changing terms of evaluation in the National Portrait Gallery: see Elizabeth Prettejohn, 'Aesthetic Value and the Professionalization of Victorian Art Criticism 1837-78', *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Spring 1997 2(1): 71-94. The most sophisticated study of changing modes of professional art practise is Robert Jensen's *Marketing Modernism in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). See also Paula Gillett, *Worlds of Art: Painters in Victorian Society*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers U.P., 1990); Diane Sachko Macleod, *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996); and Pamela Gerrish Nunn, 'Gentlemen, geniuses and interlopers' in *Problem Pictures*: 3-27.

⁶⁵Questions of gender and the commodification of the artwork (literary studies are more advanced in this field) are taken up by Herbert Sussman in *Victorian Masculinities, Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1995): 114-172; Kathy Alexis Psomiades in 'Beauty's Body: Gender Ideology and British Aestheticism', *Victorian Studies*, Fall 1992, 36(1): 31-52 and Amanda S. Anderson, 'D.G. Rossetti's "Jenny": Agency, Intersubjectivity and the Prostitute', *Genders*, Spring 1989, 4: 103-21. On the female image and commodification see Abigail Solomon-Godeau, 'The Other Side of Venus: The Visual Economy of Feminine Display' in de Grazia with Furlough, eds., *The Sex of Things*: 113-50; her research is on France but at least one of the important historical events she isolates - the mass production and circulation of the kinds of beauty prints and periodicals which are discussed above - emerged simultaneously in England. Other essays on England in the same volume reinforce her argument. Ann Bermingham's 'The Picturesque and ready-to-wear femininity', in Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, eds., *The Politics of the Picturesque*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1994): 81-119 deals with some of the same issues.

one was to invest artistic production with difference from commodity manufacture in spite of the now commodified forms through which art was sold; the other was to feature women as the object, rather than the subject, of the romantic, individualised subjectivity of the artist/genius.⁶⁶ The significance of gender to securing the identity of the artist is suggested by the intensity with which the masculine boundaries of the Royal Academy were defended, particularly during the third quarter of the nineteenth century when these shifts in forms of aesthetic production and appreciation were taking place.⁶⁷ While issues of sexuality and its commodification were implicated in all of these practices, it is important to observe that the commodification of the art object, and the threatened commodification of the artist, were at the centre of the whirlpool which drew these issues in. The representation of women was the trope through which problems concerning the nature of the art object were contested, and its mobilisation in this context profoundly altered the discourse around images of women.

The female image could thus be read not as an image of a woman, but as the signifier of the object's status as an art commodity. The thoroughness of the break which separated women from their images during the latter half of the nineteenth century registers in the critical writing about portraits of women from this period. Scholars of Van Dyck always credited him with remarkable powers of verisimilitude and an unflattering frankness; these were never considered desirable traits in women's portraiture, but the way in which Van Dyck's failing in this regard was discussed did subtly change between mid- and late-century. In the middle of the nineteenth century it was the painter's failure of perception, one stage in a process of recording, which led to the poor results: William Carpenter wrote that when it came to women Van Dyck 'had not a strong perception of the beautiful'.⁶⁸ In the early twentieth century, the Portrait Gallery's director located the failing in the paintings

⁶⁶See Herbert Sussman on Millais in *Victorian Masculinities*: 114-172; in 'Painting Indoors: Leighton and his studio,' *Apollo*, February 1996, N.S. 143(408): 20/21, Elizabeth Prettejohn makes the important point that Leighton's technique involved a making a large number of drawings which he never sold, which she interprets as a refutation of the commodification of the artwork.

⁶⁷See Cherry in *Painting Women*: 53-64 and Dodd, 'Art Education for Women in the 1860s'.

⁶⁸William Hookham Carpenter, *Pictorial Notices of Van Dyck and His Contemporaries*, (London: James Carpenter, 1844): 47.

rather than the artist, calling Van Dyck's paintings of women 'expressionless and insipid': it is the portrait as an art object, rather than the artist's work in transcribing the image, which is being appraised.⁶⁹ These changing terms of criticism also registered in the inclusion of new painters in the canon of beautiful portraitists. John Hoppner, R.A., was suddenly the subject of praise because he succeeding in creating objects of beauty out of his sitters, investing his female sitters 'with the exaggerated eyes, the cupid's bow mouth, and the lovely lines of the figure, all in accordance with the ideal graces of the period.' These generalising propensities are appreciated as appropriate and beautiful in his female portraits, while his male portraits are described as resembling 'puppets'.⁷⁰

This culture of the connoisseurship of beautiful portraits affected the Portrait Gallery's collection of beauties by shifting the emphasis away from the beauty of the sitter and onto the beauty of the portrait. Their final acquisition in this category during the nineteenth century was a portrait of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (NPG 1041, figure 28), given as a gift by her great-grandson Ronald Sutherland Gower, artist, author of numerous appreciative works on portrait painters, and member of the Board of Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery.⁷¹ The Duchess of Devonshire would have been quite entitled to a place in the Gallery strictly on historical grounds: though few of her contemporaries were impressed with her beauty, she was the leading lady of fashion during her day and made quite a mark on its politics, having campaigned vociferously for Fox. Her work in this arena was satirized through sexual imagery, and as she was rumoured to have had an affair with the Prince of Wales, her reputation was suitably racy in this regard for her portrait to have the conventional connotations of beauty as contained within the Portrait Gallery's collection.⁷² Normally, the Trustees tried to acquire portraits that represented the sitter at the time in life during which they were most influential. Should the Portrait Gallery have wished to commemorate the acts and life of the Duchess, they would likely

⁶⁹Lionel Cust, *Anthony Van Dyck: An Historical Study of His Life and Works*, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1905):174

⁷⁰Andrew W. Tuer, *Bygone Beauties: A Select Series Of Ten Portraits of Ladies of Rank and Fashion*, (London: Field and Tuer, 1883): 1.

⁷¹His appointment is discussed in Chapter two, section I.

⁷²A useful discussion of the Duchess' life and representation can be found in Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, (Yale University Press 1992, reprinted London: Pimlico, 1994): 242-50.



Figure 28. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire* (1757 - 1806)
Canvas, ca. 1761, 58.4 x 47, NPG 1041

have sought a portrait that represented her in the full flower of her womanhood; perhaps even one of the portraits (or copies thereof) that represented her with her child. But the portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire acquired in 1896 depicts her *as* a child. Even this childish figure, perhaps six years old, shares in some of the formal attributes of the beauty: the oval portrait has nothing to speak of in the way of background, and shows a figure with large eyes and bared shoulders. But in this case the Portrait Gallery did not acquire just a portrait of a beauty, they acquired a beautiful portrait. At a time when the Portrait Gallery's competition with the National Gallery for connoisseurial appreciation was its most intense, the acquisition of a genuine Reynolds - regarded as the greatest of English portrait painters - was a coup of connoisseurship.

The historical beauty, Georgiana Spencer, Duchess of Devonshire, is hardly referred to in the portrait of her acquired by the National Portrait Gallery. The charm, influence, sexuality, and agency of the historical character are deferred by the portrait's representation of a child, who can hardly have possessed a fraction of the personal attributes of the woman, much less have conducted her formidable social, political and philanthropic campaigns. What is referred to in this acquisition is the beautiful portrait, the beauty consumed by the connoisseur in his assessment of an object of aesthetic value. Where once this beauty might have inhered in a woman, the changes in art production and appreciation in the latter decades of the nineteenth century had appropriated the values of the beautiful to the art object. Through this historical process did the beauty possessed by the women in the collection of the National Portrait Gallery become a 'masque': an object to be worn or discarded, to make an impression, but not an impact.

IV. Claiming beauty

The culture of beauty as a signifier of female lives and virtues did not vanish without a trace, but was revived by women - specifically society ladies - of the 1890s. Their self-representation through portraiture and to some extent in dress recalled not their Victorian forbears but the adventurous, confident women of the eighteenth century, who were then some of the most well-known historical beauties. Mrs. F. Harcourt edited *The Book of Beauty (Late Victorian*

Era) (1896), following, in her words, 'in the footsteps of Lady Blessington...and of Mrs. Norton'; like its early nineteenth-century predecessors it celebrated the virtuous if conventional feminine roles of wife and mother in an annual-type collection of photographs, prose and poetry. Margaret Maynard writes of this trend that 'at a period when there was considerable anxiety about the pace of social change and concern about declining marriage rates and alteration in the relationships between women and men, there was an attempt in some sectors to reclaim the indefinable charm of womanhood and thus the respect of men'.⁷³ In the terms set out here, it can also be construed as an attempt by women to reclaim from artists the quality of beauty.

Maynard notes that the historicising qualities of female portraiture during this period can be read as 'in part a reaction to modern work, including that of Whistler and Sargent...[in which] the "sitter was merely the leitmotiv in a symphony of tone and colour"'.⁷⁴ The historicising portrait appealed because of its potentially straightforward and determinate signification of the woman being depicted. Women actively promoted these representations of their own beauty, not least through the organisation at the Grafton Galleries of an exhibition titled 'Fair Women'. Organised by the Ladies Committee, headed by the Princess of Wales, the 'Fair Women' exhibition was a bold attempt to reassert the association between women and beauty. It included 236 portraits of women from all ages, miniatures, and an exhibition of antique *objets de toilette*, reminders that the real tools of beauty are those on a woman's dressing table. And while the exhibition represented a connoisseur's canon of female portraiture, there was a clear attempt to link the lives of the women with the fact of their representation in the exhibition: the catalogue asserted that some of the women were more famous for 'their historical interest, their influence, or their wit than for their beauty...The Directors, however, do not know of any fixed standard by which such pictures can be judged, and, further, they

⁷³Margaret Maynard, "A Dream of Fair Women": Revival Dress and the Formation of Late Victorian Images of Femininity", *Art History*, September 1989, 12(3): 326.

⁷⁴Maynard, "A Dream of Fair Women": 322, quoting R.C. Witt, 'Romney's Portraits at the Grafton Gallery' *Living Age*, 1901, 20: 192.

believe that in the eyes of some one person, at least, almost every woman has been considered fair.'⁷⁵

The intention of the Ladies Committee in organising the 'Fair Women' exhibition seems to have been to return to the historical subject to the image of the 'beauty'. It can be a mere gloss on what is now a vast literature to report that when used as emblems of formal beauty, women are deprived of subjectivity; some might even say that that is the object of the exercise. But it was not always the object of the exercise. Even though female beauty seems almost always to have worked to represent women's sexual consumability, that could sometimes, in some contexts, be appropriated by the woman as one small, fragile, and limiting weapon in the armoury of her own powers. Aestheticism's appropriation of beauty to the painter and painting-without-a-subject deprived women of beauty as a signifier of their own subjectivity. This was a mixed curse, to be sure, one which ultimately could lead to a feminist analysis of the dangerous play between image-and-woman; but it also deprived the women of the 1890s, and indeed the women who visited the 1972 exhibition 'The Masque of Beauty', of the full consciousness of the significance of the possession of beauty to a long line of their predecessors.

Modernity and modernism are, though, hydra-headed, and if the beauty was overshadowed by the beautiful during the late 1890s, her eclipse allowed for the exposure of another kind of nationally venerated woman: the woman, or more precisely, the *lady* author. Not coincidentally, the women authors were the antithesis of the 'beauty' in many respects. In the historical narrative, the beauties occupied the past, leaving the women authors to represent the present. They represented that present with a profoundly different face of femininity: recognised for their reserved but constructive labour, the women authors were a morally powerful - but aesthetically muted - presence in the Portrait Gallery. The parosexuality of the beauties, having been adopted for the making of the (masculine) artist, was marginalised from the images of women authors and the feminine present.

⁷⁵*Fair Women*. Grafton Galleries Summer Exhibition 1894, official catalogue (London: Grafton Galleries, 1894); a 'memorial' of the exhibition also published under the title *Fair Women* was issued printed in 1894 by Blades, East and Blades; this too emphasised sitters', rather than the artists', biographies.

CHAPTER FIVE

AUTHORS AND THE (AN)AESTHETICS OF INTELLECT

Portraits of women of letters formed the final third of the the National Portrait Gallery's nineteenth-century collection of women's portraits. As a group, the portraits of authors make a distinctive contribution to the collection, in both their biographical and visual connotations. Next to the lavishly ornamented representations of queens, or to the aestheticised and eroticised court portraits of beauties, the portraits of authors seem colourless, stiff and reserved. Their visual differences of the portraits of authors combined with distinctive biographical characteristics to perform an important role in the narrative constructed by the Portrait Gallery's collection. Predominantly a collection of contemporaries and near contemporaries, the portraits of women authors were those in which the achievements of modern English women were acknowledged. Those achievements were, however, only recognised within what were constructed as traditional forms of women's writing, and were thus contained within a historicising context that eroded the potentially transgressive features of modern women's writing.¹

The majority of the portraits of authors were collected during the latter two decades of the nineteenth century, a period which saw the unravelling of the most restrictive nineteenth-century precepts of femininity. Women's access to the dignities of formal education and employment was one of the contentious fields in which 'the woman question' had been played out during the third quarter of the century, and women's presence in these institutions was being registered in new ways. By the 1880s and 1890s, women's colleges had been established at Oxford, Cambridge and London; schoolmistresses had been accorded a new professional status and a sense of public importance; and lobbies for the paid employment of middle-class women had been active for twenty or more years.²

¹Janis Bergman-Carton explores some of the same themes in the representation of French women writers in *The Woman of Ideas in French Art, 1830-48*, (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Many of the problems of representing learned women that she describes are comparable to the ones identified here, although the solutions which French painters and sculptors found for representing women writers were generally (though not entirely) different from those which appeared in the Portrait Gallery's collection.

²A survey of women's education in England is made in June Purvis, *A History of Women's Education in England*, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991) and Barry Turner, *Equality for Some*, (London: Ward Lock Educational, 1974); for the nineteenth century see Jane Rendall, 'Educating Hearts and Minds', *The Origins of Modern Feminism: Women in Britain, France and the United States*, (London: Macmillan, 1985): 108-140; Joan N. Burstyn, *Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood*, (London: Croom Helm, 1980); and Margaret Bryant, *Facing Femininities*: Chapter five

Most importantly for this study, the public presence of the woman author was not only an accepted fact, but seems to have entered a new phase due to challenges that were being made to the gendered identity of the author.³ The Portrait Gallery's collection of female authors might be seen as an attempt to bring historical validation to what was a new scale of women's education and practice in the learned arts.

In the National Portrait Gallery, however, the recognition of women writers did not so much affirm new trends as authorize new developments through old traditions. The Portrait Gallery's collection of women authors refuted the challenging connotations of women asserting their presence in the learned arts by representing women writers within the conventions of the 'traditional' values of feminine scholarship. Section I describes the model of the 'learned lady' who served as an exemplar of the female author past and present, taking particular note of the correlations between the image of the

The Unexpected Revolution, (London: University of London Institute of Education, 1979). On women as educators see Joyce Senders Pederson, 'Schoolmistresses and Headmistresses: Elites and Education in Nineteenth Century England', *Journal of British Studies*, 1975, 16(1): 135-162. Women's work as domestic servants and in some manufacturing was accepted as a necessity, and seemed obviously ineligible for national celebration; for interesting accounts of the problem of middle class women and paid employment see Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England*, (London: Virago, 1988): 1-23; and Martha Vicinus, ed., *A Widening Sphere*, (London and Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977). The history of the campaign for middle-class women's paid employment is often covered in the historiography of feminism, see Dorothy Thompson, 'Women, Work and Politics in Nineteenth Century England: The Problem of Authority', in Jane Rendall, ed., *Equal or Different: Women's Politics 1800-1914*, (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987): 57-81, and 'Work and Organisation' in Jane Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism*: 150-188. 'Accounts of women's careers as authors in the nineteenth century are given in Susan P. Casteras and Linda H. Peterson, *A Struggle for Fame: Victorian Women Artists and Authors*, (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 1994); Nigel Cross, *The Common Writer: Life in Nineteenth-century Grub Street*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

³Literary historians who argue that authors were increasingly released from gendered expectation include Elaine Showalter, 'Queen George', *Sexual Anarchy*, (reprint London: Virago, 1992): 59-75; Ellen Miller Casey, 'Edging Women Out?: Reviews of Women Novelists in the *Athanaeum*, 1860-1900', *Victorian Studies*, Winter 1996, 39(2): 151-172. Contesting views can be found in Gaye Tuchman with Nina E. Fortin, *Edging Women Out: Victorian Novelists, Publishers, and Social Change* (London: Routledge, 1989) and Nicola Diane Thompson, *Reviewing Sex: Gender and the Reception of Victorian Novels*, (London: Macmillan, 1996). This chapter will suggest that each view accurately describes a different constituency, and that the nature and place of gender in authorship was hotly contested, particularly during the later nineteenth century.

modern female monarch and the woman author. Section II describes how the selection of sitters and portraits for the Portrait Gallery inscribed that model as one present throughout the centuries. If the majority of portraits of women authors were near contemporaries, the inclusion of images of women from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries constructed a continuous historical tradition of learned women. The continuity of the learned woman in the English past, resulting in a proliferation of these genteel teachers in the present, suggested the virtues of the English tradition and the splendid results of its 'progress'.

The efflorescence of the learned woman in the nineteenth century represented a desirable but not unproblematic aspect of 'modern' life, particularly in an institution where there was a substantial investment in the masculinity of artistic production. Section III considers how the impact of large numbers of contemporary women writers in the Portrait Gallery's collection was restricted aesthetically by collecting the most modest of portraits of contemporaries. Eminent women writers who conformed to patriarchal conventions of female scholarship from all ages were included in the collection: those who did not were carefully excepted, or represented by a portrait image which displayed attributes consistent with that of a conservatising feminine ideal (see Appendix 2-D for a complete list of sitters included in the category 'authors'). The conservatising and historicising image of the woman writer in the Portrait Gallery worked to contain the implications of her role in modern life; the portraits were unpretentiously plain in character and lacked idealising qualities, dissociating authors from the 'modern' aesthetic. While acknowledging both historical and modern women's contribution to national life, the Portrait Gallery's collection characterised women authors in a way that was consistent with patriarchal constructions of women's contribution to the nation.

I. Models of the learned lady

If the woman author usually cuts a figure of brash modernity in histories of the latter decades of the nineteenth century, that figure was not without its historical precedents and traditions. Representing both domestic virtues and polite cultivation, the educated woman had long been used as a trope for figuring national civilisation.

Representing, perhaps, a corrective to the more brutal aspects of nation-building, the learned lady began to be celebrated historically in the eighteenth century, most notably with George Ballard's *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain, who have been celebrated for their writings or skill in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences* (1752). The convention which celebrated the learned lady did not depict her as a transgressive or forward-thinking figure, but as an exemplar of feminine virtues. Importantly a learned *lady*, within the National Portrait Gallery this trope was used to represent both historical women, and contemporary women writers. This had a conservatising effect on the representation of women writers in the National Portrait Gallery, most visible in the connection effected between contemporary writers and the most eminent of contemporary ladies, Queens Victoria and Caroline.

The image of the learned lady which was advanced by the National Portrait Gallery drew on a long history of élite English women as writers of letters and poetry, keepers of account books and patrons of the arts. Élite women usually had some form of education, even if a superficial one, from the middle ages, and exceptionally learned women are recorded throughout European history: almost invariably their preserve was the convent, and the aristocratic or courtly household.⁴ It was in the context of social and economic privilege, as well its devotional and political necessity, that, historically, women were schooled in letters. Élite women used their abilities as wordsmiths for practical communication, for amusement, for learned reflection, and for the instruction or amusement of others. Women were remarked and remembered for these skills, just as they were for the political and social power which the skills of authorship enabled. This tradition of women's education and writing was also expressed as a tradition of portraiture.

As it was known in the nineteenth century, the life story of Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, stood as a fifteenth century exemplar of the kind of learned women whose portraits were collected by the Portrait Gallery in its first fifty years. Margaret Beaufort's pattern of life and scholarship are characteristic

⁴See Patricia H. Labalme, ed., *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, (New York and London: New York University Press, 1980); and Turner, *Equality for Some*.
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of those of learned medieval and Renaissance women throughout western Europe.⁵ Her period of greatest activity as a scholar was, like those of many of her peers, also a period of retreat from what were for her the worldly interests of dynastic politics: much of her literary work was undertaken in monastic orders. The convent was one of the important contexts which offered women an opportunity to engage in intellectual work, but church authority also limited their scholarly enterprise. While 'all Christian piety in women was commendable', a woman's engagement with serious scholarly or theological questions was not usually regarded as pious: the female intellect might show learning but not invention.⁶ Margaret Beaufort's literary efforts were largely works of translation, one of a number of forms which were considered suitable subjects for women because the work appeared to be laborious, but not creative.

The portraits of Margaret Beaufort which were acquired by the National Portrait Gallery can be interpreted as being images of the pious retirement which was celebrated in the Portrait Gallery's collection of learned ladies. Two of the Countess' portraits were acquired by the Portrait Gallery in the nineteenth century: the first (NPG 356) is an electrotype copy of her effigy in Westminster Abbey, commissioned in 1875 as part of a group of English monarchs; the second (NPG 551, figure 29) is a bust-length panel painted by an unknown artist, which was acquired from the British Museum in a large transfer of works made in 1879. In both portraits she appears in what appears to be monastic dress, with her head covered with the characteristically English gable hood and collar. A cloak falls from beneath the collar, surrounding and concealing the female body beneath. In the monument, her hands are drawn together in prayer. In the panel portrait, her body is rendered even more abstract by the geometric patterning and straightened outlines of her clothing. The face shows more contour, but still presents the viewer with a

⁵See Patricia H. Labalme, ed., *Beyond Their Sex: Learned Women of the European Past*, particularly the editor's introduction: 2 - 8; Joan M. Ferrante, 'The Education of Women in the Middle Ages in Theory, Fact and Fantasy': 9 - 42; and Roland H. Bainton, 'Learned Women in the Europe of the Sixteenth Century: 117-25. See also the opening chapter of Barry Turner, *Equality for Some*, (London: Ward Lock Educational, 1974).

⁶Labalme, *Beyond Their Sex*: 3. This principle has been articulated in a variety of ways since the classical age, its progress mapped by Christine Battersby in *Gender and Genius*, (London: The Women's Press, 1989).
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Figure 29. Unknown Artist, *Lady Margaret Beaufort* (1443-1509)
Panel, date unknown, 68.6 x 54.9, NPG 551

symmetrical and serious visage, thin lips pressed together and gazing expressionlessly away from the viewer. The Countess' proud but deferential figure is completed at the bottom of the panel by hands holding what might be a prayer book, featured by the light flesh tones against her black dress. Her relationship to the book is importantly that of a reader, not of a writer.

This painting of Margaret Beaufort can be read as an exemplary illustration of St. Paul's exhortation to women to be learners.⁷ Her clothing seamlessly surrounds her body, shaping it literally as a container, a vessel. Only her perceptive organs are exposed: her lips do not move; her eyes see but do not challenge the viewer; her hands hold a book but no pen with which to write. Painted entirely in black, white and flesh tones, the limited palette and severity of shapes in the panel give it a sombre feel. The image of the learned woman was modified by fashions in female activity, in dress, and in portraiture, so that not all the portraits of female authors collected by the National Portrait Gallery during the nineteenth century render the image of the learned woman in such explicitly theological terms. Many elements of her portraiture were informed by and related to her Christian devotion, elements which were reworked in different ways, but with similar intent, in images of learned women in subsequent centuries.⁸ The themes of the portraits of Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby characterised those of the learned women represented in the Portrait Gallery.

The forms of education (and of the representation) of educated women were, in subsequent centuries, secularized, but its patterns persisted into the nineteenth century. Even in its most rudimentary forms - the sometimes superficial 'accomplishments' expected of young marriageable women in drawing or music - the education of women in the arts remained part of the culture of the English élite into the nineteenth century.⁹ This education was consistent with the

⁷A survey of her portraiture can be found in a recent (pointedly titled) biography, Michael K. Jones and Malcolm G. Underwood, *The King's Mother*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1992): 293-95.

⁸Bergman-Carton also identifies Christian imagery as an important trope for the representation of learned women in *The Woman of Ideas in French Art, 1830-48*; see particularly pp. 129-60, where she deals interestingly with the moral dichotomisation of images of learned women through the Virgin/Magdalen, virgin/whore trope.

⁹According to Pamela Horn in *Ladies of the Manor: Wives and Daughters in Country-house Society, 1830-1914*, (Farnham: Alan Sutton, 1991) many elite
Facing Femininities: Chapter five p. 220

values of ornamental display which shaped one aspect of courtly femininity, and with the traditions of scholarship and patronage which élite women, by virtue of their social and economic status, could involve themselves. Consequently, the image of the learned woman was one which could be appropriated for both historical and contemporary women. In a letter to the *Times* drafted by Scharf which announced the 1883 acquisition of the portrait of George Eliot, he discusses portraits of several nineteenth century women authors, and the sixteenth century portrait said to be of Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke.¹⁰ Contemporary writers were thus notionally - and I will argue also visually - associated within the National Portrait Gallery with the tradition of learned ladies.

That the Portrait Gallery's ideal of the lady author was founded more in social graces than literary or intellectual accomplishment is suggested by Scharf's imagination of an eminent contemporary lady - Queen Victoria - at the head of this entourage: he wrote that her portrait would 'crown our really bright constellation commemorating our national wealth of female intellect.'¹¹ One of the ways that Queen Victoria felt comfortable communicating with her subjects was through writing - she published *Leaves from Our Journal in the Highlands* during her period of bereavement in 1868, and *More Leaves* in 1883 - so it is perhaps not so surprising that he should take such a view; but the image of the learned woman was not restricted amongst the monarchy to Victoria. It is the portraits of Queen Victoria and Queen Caroline which bear the weight of an association between the most conservative forms of nineteenth-century femininity and the learned woman.

Victoria's portrait by von Angeli, copied by Lady Abercromby for the National Portrait Gallery (NPG 708; figure 19), fits at least as comfortably with the series of authors as it does with the rest of the collection of royal women.¹² The formal tokens of her regency sit

women received little in the way of formal education; M. Jeanne Peterson's *Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989) suggests that women's informal education could sometimes be vigorous and draw on resources not generally accessible to women: 34-67.

¹⁰Registry documents, NPG, London.

¹¹Letter from George Scharf to Doyne(?), 21 November 1883, NPG, London.

¹²See the discussion of Queen Victoria's portraits in the Portrait Gallery in Chapter three, section III.

uneasily in this intimate, retiring image - an image which has more in common with the gallery's portrait of Hannah More (for instance) than with that of Victoria's most immediate predecessor as Queen Regnant, Queen Anne. Its medium is the most pointed hint in the direction of homely accomplishment: in stark contrast with the formal full length oil portraits of her predecessors, Victoria chose to present to the Gallery a watercolour made by one her ladies-in-waiting. Showing her wearing the (by then outmoded) cap and a plain black silk, her dress further suggests the domestic informality which is connoted by the portrait's provenance. It is not so much a portrait of a queen than a portrait of a lady, made in the comfortable and respectable intimacy of female companionship in the home.

Similar observations can be made of the two portraits collected of Caroline of Brunswick, which drew even more explicitly on the image of accomplishment. The Lawrence portrait showing Queen Caroline interrupted while modelling (NPG 244; figure 15) shows her in one of the conventional poses of the woman artist: dressed to the neck and holding a modelling tool (but not using it), with what might be presumed to be the fruits of her labours (the bust) at her side.¹³ In the portrait by Lonsdale (NPG 498; figure 30) Queen Caroline assumes the guise of author: this portrait shows her poised thoughtfully over an open book, with her head swathed in white lace. Lonsdale exaggerated Caroline's arms and shoulders in this portrait, and the hands are inattentively painted, giving it an amateurish look rarely seen in the Gallery's collection. If taken, however, in the context of portraits of authors rather than those of Queens, Lonsdale's picture of Caroline of Brunswick is a most appropriate addition to the collection.

Visually, the portraits of Queens Victoria and Caroline do not fit coherently into the chronological sequence of monarchs constructed by the Portrait Gallery. Instead, they cohere with their contemporaries: the learned women of the nineteenth century who gained eminence through their dedication to the arts and letters. The representation of Queens Victoria and Caroline as learned women can be seen to have functioned within the National Portrait Gallery's nineteenth century collection of women writers in at least two ways.

¹³The bust is assumed to represent the Duke of Brunswick, Queen Caroline's father, but is not now recorded as part of the Royal Collection.



Figure 30. James Lonsdale, *Queen Caroline* (1768-1821)
Canvas, ca. 1820, 76.2 x 64.1, NPG 498

On the one hand, representing Queens Caroline and Victoria as learned women conferred an image of moral seriousness, piety, domesticity and personal accomplishment on the two most important female aristocrats of the nineteenth century. A more striking feature of the use of this iconography in the Portrait Gallery's collection is the way that women writers of many ages, classes and temperaments were assimilated into a model of representation which was also used for the reigning Queen and one of her peers. In the National Portrait Gallery authors, like queens, were granted the status of exemplars of the feminine, and women, in the nation.

II. The author framed as a lady

A woman did not have to be an aristocrat to be included in the Portrait Gallery's collection of authors, but she did need to be a lady. The corporate identity of learned women was domesticated, and socialised (always chastely) in a way which isolated her from the possibility of individual genius. The woman writer conformed to an ideal of femininity which was carefully constructed to complement, rather than threaten, male genius, and to be consistent with her role as a guardian of hearth and a rearer of children. Representing a large number of women from a long period, the collection acknowledged the vast range of women's achievements in the learned arts from four centuries of British history. A forceful description of women's literary contribution was achieved through the inclusion of portraits which expressed their positive attributes through a variety of pictorial mechanisms. The portraits gathered by the Gallery reflected the diversity of ways that women entered into their own literary world, but the Trustees' powers of exclusion as well as inclusion were exercised to achieve a powerful coherence in the collection. By rejecting both certain women, and certain kinds of portraiture, the Trustees severely regulated the image of the learned woman in the National Portrait Gallery.

Whether a woman author was included in the National Portrait Gallery's collection seems to have depended in large part on whether her image was consistent with the tradition exemplified by Margaret Beaufort. This required that a woman's writing or work be appropriate to the feminine tradition; and/or that her life express the values of traditionally feminine scholarship; and/or that her portrait

image appeared to be consistent with what turns out to have been a very powerful visual identity for the learned woman. That visual identity was one which could accommodate pre-modern images of women's piety (such as Margaret Beaufort's), informal drawings, and modern 'professional' portraits which referred to a woman's practice as an author.¹⁴ A general rule of thumb seems to be that only if a woman met at least two of the three criteria would her portrait be included by the Trustees. The variety of ways that a woman could slip in, or out, of the net of the Gallery's collection makes it difficult to address the whole collection through generalities, and there are fascinating exceptions to every rule: a few specific examples will hopefully suffice to indicate its tendencies. As in the portraits of women royals which modelled femininity, the portraits of women authors construct an image of the feminine consistent with (and sometimes deliberately drawing on) patriarchal models of the family.

While the range of literary genres in which women were considered competent had expanded by the nineteenth century to include novels, poetry, children's writing, female biography, travel writing and devotional literature, the approval of women's work within those genres was contingent on the work addressing feminine concerns such as intimate social relationships.¹⁵ One of the characteristic and important visual themes used to represent the learned woman was the theme of domestic labouring. It was a convention of *Dictionary of National Biography* entries to describe any woman author's competence in homemaking skills, and this convention was carried through the National Portrait Gallery's collection pictorially and textually - in its 1858 catalogue the biography of Elizabeth Carter notes that 'her learned pursuits did not preclude her attention to more feminine accomplishments and music'.¹⁶ The explicit domestication of women's intellectual labour,

¹⁴The images I am referring to here are from the same period, and seem to have been part of the same social practice of establishing professional value, as those discussed by Ludmilla Jordanova in 'Medical Men 1780-1820', Joanna Woodall, ed., *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (Manchester: M.U.P., 1997): 101-118. The portrait of Mrs. Trimmer illustrated in figure 31 is a particularly good example.

¹⁵See Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*; Cross, 'The Female Drudge' in *the Common Writer*: 164-186; and Claire Richter Sherman with Adele M. Holcomb, 'Precursors and Pioneers, 1820-1890' in their *Women As Interpreters of the Visual Arts, 1820-1979*, (London and Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981): 3-26.

¹⁶*Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts & c. in the National Portrait Gallery*, (London: H.M.S.O., 1858): 44.

which increasingly found its way out of the house by way of the press, the bookshop, printshop, and lending library, worked to feminise women's literary work and accommodate it within the tradition of women's education and work in the home. An important means of this domestication was selecting a portrait which rendered an author's clothing, activity, and setting recognisably domestic.

The collection of authors is distinguished in this respect through the representation of head coverings. Apart from crowns, in portraits made after the sixteenth century head coverings do not feature either in the portraits of monarchs or in the beauties collected by the National Portrait Gallery. On the other hand, a great number of the portraits of authors - twenty-two, or nearly half- show the women wearing some form of cap.¹⁷ This list includes the very early portraits of Margaret Beaufort, and portraits that were made as late as the mid-nineteenth century. The head coverings worn are usually white caps frilled at the edge, a mob cap or its more formal and fashionable cousin. These kinds of head coverings were associated from the seventeenth through to the mid-nineteenth century with being 'at home'. Worn by all classes, a plain white cap was the daily headgear of the upstairs maid, and in its more elaborate version the morning wear of the lady of the house.¹⁸ Signifying the intimacy of domestic life as well as its labour, the white cap contextualised the labour of the woman author in the domestic sphere.

An interesting variation on the domestication of the learned woman was taken by the Portrait Gallery in its presentation of Mary Somerville. Her portrait (NPG 690, figure 31) is representative of the most distinctive aspects of the collection, including its medium; its format; and its rendering of the sitter. It was bequeathed by the sitter's daughter Miss Martha Somerville to the Portrait Gallery in 1879, but due to misdirected post the Trustees did not receive news of the bequest until 1883. When the Trustees learned of the bequest, the portrait was in the possession of another of Miss Martha

¹⁷These are NPG 28; 64; 118; 356; 404; 412; 427; 551; 598; 689; 690; 765; 796; 898; 954; 990; 1019; 1030; 1081; 1144; 1151; and 1237. There is no discernable pattern in their specific acquisition or historical appearance.

¹⁸See Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Occupational Costume in England*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1976) or Hilda Amphlett, *Hats: A History of Fashion in Headwear*, (Chalfont St. Giles: Richard Sadler, 1974).



Figure 31. James Rennie Swinton, *Mary Somerville* (1780-1872)
Chalk, 1848, 69.2 x 60.7, NPG 690; shown as installed at South
Kensington gallery, ca. 1885. Photograph courtesy the NPG

Somerville's beneficiaries, William Ramsay Fairfax, with whom Scharf then entered into correspondence. One subject of their letters was the portrait's frame: the beautifully executed but small and simple chalk drawing was placed in a massive and elaborately carved frame. Scharf wrote that he had heard it was excessive, but that 'of course, if the frame has any special emblems on it, the Trustees wd. not desire ever to suggest a separation.'¹⁹ In the end the frame, a special emblem of women's domestic craftsmanship, was retained: it had been hand-carved by the sitters' daughter, an accomplishment deemed notable enough to be included in the label for the portrait. Mary Somerville's portrait, which would have been familiar to readers as the one engraved for the frontispiece of her work *Physical Geography*, was presented 'framed' within references to her feminine labour as the parent of a modestly accomplished daughter.²⁰

Where Mary Somerville was 'framed' by her daughter, Christina Rossetti was similarly 'framed' by her mother, and for that matter, brother. The portrait acquired by the National Portrait Gallery of Christina Rossetti (NPG 990, figure 32) is in fact a double portrait, a rarity in the early collection.²¹ In the crayon drawing, it is Rossetti senior whose image is prominent: appearing in the foreground, where her blue eyes, fair hair and white widow's cap attract light to the picture, her darker daughter appears almost as her shadow. Although Christina's face gets its due share of the window light, she is literally sidelined in the drawing: sidelined, in fact, by her brother. When offered, the picture attracted as much attention for having been drawn by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Christina's famous Pre-Raphaélite brother, as it did for being her portrait. The various

¹⁹Scharf to William Ramsay Fairfax, 14 September 1883, Registry documents, NPG, London.

²⁰Having received the frame, Scharf wrote to Fairfax on 22 September 1883 that 'the frame is most admirably wrought, and from the skill displayed in it am induced to believe that the same lady must have executed many specimens'. Figure 29 shows the portrait hung in the frame at the South Kensington Galleries; by the time the portrait was refurbished for hanging at the St. Martin's Place Gallery in 1896, the oval frame had been replaced by a lighter rectangular frame. Registry documents, NPG, London. Thanks to Jacob Simon of the National Portrait Gallery for pursuing my enquiry regarding this frame.

²¹The only double portraits treated in this thesis belong to the present category. The portrait of Charles and Mary Lamb, (NPG 1019) acquired in 1895, is another instance a woman author appearing in a double portrait. Mary is represented in the collection only by this portrait; two of Charles Lamb's individual portraits (NPG 449 and 507) had previously been acquired by the gallery. Mrs. Blount, a friend of Pope, appears with him in (NPG 112).



Figure 32. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Christina Rossetti (1830-94) with her mother, Frances Mary Lavinia Rossetti*
Chalk, 1877, 42.5 x 48.2, NPG 990

members of the family invoked by the portrait - which was a gift to the Gallery from brother William Rossetti - recreates a family circle that contextualises Christina's work as part of her domestic activity: this reading of her labour as a product of her family life rather than her inner life was reproduced in the catalogue entry for the portrait which gave the names of her parents before the names of her poems.²²

Locating women's writing in the context of family life did more than simply assert its domestic setting, it attributed it with a positive and significant gendered difference of quality. While the portrait of the Rossettis draws attention to the fascinating role of intimate exchange in creative work, that exchange was not one which in the nineteenth century would have been credited with the production of works of 'genius'.²³ Informed by Romantic conceptions of genius which located the act of creation in *solitude and communion with 'nature'* rather than family intimacy and domestic life, 'genius' was understood to be located in the independent life of men, in spite of the feminine qualities which descriptions of genius often embraced. The depressing repetition of the phrase 'she was not a genius' in the *Dictionary of National Biography* entries on women writers is given visual expression in the Portrait Gallery's collection of domesticated women writers. Not only did the imagery of the collection work to link their work with domestic life and labour, but it deliberately excluded imagery which might have associated women's creative efforts with Romantic conceptions of genius.

A portrait by Pickersgill of William Wordsworth purchased by the National Portrait Gallery in 1860 (NPG 104) shows him seated outdoors with a boulder for his desk and the corner of a suitably romantic sky showing alongside the forested background. An

²²The entry reads, 'the eminent poetess; born in London in 1830; daughter of Gabriele Rossetti, professor of Italian in King's College, London, and commentator on Dante, and Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori, (1800-1886), his wife; authoress of the "Goblin Market", "The Princes Progress," and other poems, died in London 29 Dec. 1894', *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts and c. in the National Portrait Gallery*, 11th edn., 1900: 398.

²³This is a field of study which deserves more attention, but which has had a fine opening contribution in Whitney Chadwick and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., *Significant Others: Creativity and Intimate Partnership*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993); for the importance of family to women's work as visual artists in the nineteenth century see Deborah Cherry, 'Family Business', *Painting Women*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993): 19-44.

appropriate setting for a male poet of genius, not a single female novelist, poet, or painter is shown in a similar setting. The entire collection is comprised of portraits set in explicitly domestic interiors, or in undefined space. The one portrait acquired of a woman writer which placed her in an inspiring outdoor space (NPG 1175) was promptly divested of that setting: a miniature of Jane Carlyle was reduced from its already modest proportions of 20 x 15.2 cm to about 5.5 x 4 cm by framing only the head and neck within a tiny oval.²⁴ This was represented as a response to what was regarded as poor painting - the scenery is painted in a vague manner that does not seem to have attracted the Trustees - but seems a violent reaction to have been inspired merely by landscape aesthetics. In any case, her occupation of exterior space was obviously not believed to elucidate anything about the work or character of Jane Carlyle.

The rejection of any imagery which might have connoted female 'genius' is more importantly expressed in the activity which is imaged in the collection of women writers. Studies of the visual arts suggest that the image of the creative act is a crucial signifier of artistic identity: Lynda Nead writes that in certain contexts 'the artistic process...is seen as the visual staging of the genesis of imagination and creativity; it testifies to the mental and emotional aspects of artistic production in a way that the finished object can never do.'²⁵ Part of the work of representations of artistic identity is the management the relationship of masculine and feminine qualities within the identity of the artist. In the identity of the female artist created within the nineteenth century National Portrait Gallery's collection, that visual staging of the creative act is denied to the feminine as female. Effectively, the act of creation, and its gesture of penetration, is appropriated for a male 'fantasy of auto-genesis'.²⁶

²⁴Registry documents, NPG, London. A drawing of poetess Anne Chambers, Countess Temple was similarly though not as drastically reduced; see Registry documents for NPG 246, NPG, London.

²⁵Lynda Nead, 'Seductive Canvases: Visual Mythologies of the Artist and Artistic Creativity', *Oxford Art Journal*, 1995, 18(2): 61. She picks up this theme from Chapters 4 and 7 of Battersby, *Gender and Genius*.

²⁶Nead, 'Seductive Canvases': 61. This imagery uses a conventional Freudian male psychoanalytic framework to explain the image of the 'creative act'. Caroline Arscott, in a paper titled 'Marble and Flesh: The Erotics of Artistic Creativity', audio recording of a paper delivered 1 November 1996 at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, gives an alternative reading of nineteenth century male artists as enacting a neurotic form of masculine sexuality. While these explanations are helpful for explaining the masculinisation of the artist, they reproduce that male fantasy locating the artistic act in male sexualities.

This is seen in what is importantly a *self*-portrait of Hogarth: acquired by the Portrait Gallery in 1869, it shows him directly working on a large canvas (NPG 289).²⁷

The tokens or signifiers of creative work were not always denied women in the National Portrait Gallery's collection, but the active use of them was. Ten of the women appear with books, pens, paper or other obvious references to their work as scholars, however, as in the panel portrait of Margaret Beaufort, we may hesitate to understand those tokens as signifiers of genius or even creativity.²⁸ A prayer book or bible might represent simple piety or devoted study, but not creative effort. It is an uncertain relationship which Mary Lamb has to the desk and writing implements which are represented in the portrait of herself and her brother (NPG 1019): she is nearest to them, but is standing as if having just entered the room, while her brother sits on the chair facing the desk. Whose pen is it? Only one of the ten portraits gives a really conclusive answer to that question: the portrait of Sarah Trimmer by Henry Howard (NPG 796, figure 33) captures the sitter in the act of writing, but the hand that holds the pen seems to be stilled while she actively gestures from the Bible to her page with the other. Her agency as an author is reduced to a process of transcription: on the one hand, this is an appropriate image for an author who was mainly a populariser of scripture; but as the most vigorous image of a woman writing it suggests the limitations on the representation of women's creative work in the National Portrait Gallery.

The limits of the image of the female author are also effectively revealed by the women and portraits excluded from the collection in the nineteenth century. A covered head, or a direct reference to (chaste) family relationships situated women's work as writers specifically within a regime of patriarchy which could welcome women as companions but not as literary leaders. As much as the work, lives, or portraiture of women which placed their writing

Following from the work cited in fn. 18 above, the importance of collective work at least to female artists suggests that certain concepts of feminine sexualities - i.e. those that are diversified and incomplete - might have a significant contribution to make to explanations of creativity.

²⁷This is also important with respect to the portraits of women artists, discussed in Chapter six, section V.

²⁸These are NPG 118; 403; 412; 427; 430; 551; 672; 796; 977; and 1019.



Figure 33. Henry Howard, *Sarah Trimmer* (1741-1810)
Canvas, exh. 1798, 90.2 x 68.6, NPG 796

within the boundaries of filial, spousal or maternal roles were welcome, portraits or sitters which suggested a transgression of that companionate role were carefully omitted from the collection of women authors. Authors could not be represented like beauties, a precept of the collection which contributed to the visual structuring of the Portrait Gallery's historiographical account of women and femininity.

A revealing exclusion from the ranks of women authors in the nineteenth-century collection was that of Catherine Macaulay, author of an eight volume *History of England from the Accession of James I to that of the Brunswick Line* (8 volumes, 1763-83) as well as numerous pamphlets. Her portrait was declined without ceremony: in 1879 Scharf was able to reply to yet another offer of her portrait that 'the Trustees of this Gallery have already come to the conclusion that Mrs. Catherine Macaulay is not of sufficient historical celebrity to claim a place in this collection.'²⁹ This seems an unaccountable attitude for the Board to have taken, toward a woman whose chosen genre was their own passionate interest, whose whiggish rendering of English history was sympathetic with their own, and whose personality, works, and portraits, acquired massive fame and recognition during her lifetime: Lord Lyttleton wrote to Mrs. Montagu that portraits of her are 'on every print-seller's counter'.³⁰ More than passing strange, then, that there should have been none in the National Portrait Gallery for its first forty-five years.³¹

It is more curious still considering the eligibility of a portrait of Catherine Macaulay offered to the Portrait Gallery in 1859.³² Called *Mrs. Macaulay and Dr. Wilson* by Wright of Derby (though actually her daughter Miss Macaulay), this is a double portrait of a couple which shows the female figure subordinate to the man. The portrait shows Mrs. Macaulay's friend and patron Dr. Wilson in the

²⁹Scharf to F.F. Hosford, 22 August 1879. Trustees' Correspondence, NPG, London. Minutes of the Trustees' meetings, NPG, London show that her portrait was offered to and declined by the Trustees at their meetings of 8 December 1859; 6 February 1880; and 30 November 1889.

³⁰Cited in Lucy Martin Donnelly, 'The Celebrated Mrs. Macaulay', *William and Mary Quarterly*, April 1949, Third Series, 6:176.

³¹A portrait of Catherine Macaulay was purchased by the NPG in 1904.

³²See minutes of the Trustees' meeting of 8 September 1859, and Scharf's sketch of the portrait in *National Portrait Gallery: The Notebooks of Sir George Scharf (1820-95)*, (microfilm reprint London: World Microfilms Publications, 1978), TSB 3: 36.

foreground, looking at the viewer; Macaulay (Miss or Mrs.) is seated to the side and behind a table on which rests Macaulay's *History*, a book to which both figures are pointing. It is the book which seems to have the role of authority in the painting - but the woman is looking towards Dr. Wilson. Where attention is ostensibly focussed on the *History*, it is in fact focussed on the man who occupies the central area of the painting, is the object of female attention, and who meets the gaze of the viewer. This image, which celebrates her work through male approval and pleasure, has obvious attractions for the collection of women authors - especially in contrast to, for instance, her famous portrait in the guise of 'a matron grieving for the lost liberties of Rome'. The Wright of Derby portrait was the only portrait of Catherine Macaulay that was ever brought visually to the attention of the Trustees as a portrait suitable for purchase, though it was probably easily identified as a portrait of her daughter.

If it was not for want of a suitable image there are several possible reasons why the Trustees might have excluded Mrs. Macaulay. Catherine Macaulay was a passionate republican, and wrote her history of England as a kind of corrective to what she perceived as the party-interest of historians like Hume. The strength of her religious and political convictions blinded her to any sense of their contingency, and she refused to admit that her own belief in the ancient rights of Britons, and the moral judgements she pronounced on historical characters who failed to protect them, was a form of party interest. She regarded her own work as the objective reporting of historical facts, although later evaluations of her work found it one-sided.³³ Isaac D'Israeli reported, apparently without foundation, that when studying in the British Library 'Mrs. Macaulay was accustomed when she came to any passage unfavourable to her party or in favour of the Stuarts to destroy the page'.³⁴ Since the republican ideals advanced so enthusiastically by Mrs. Macaulay were entirely at odds with those promoted by the Board of Trustees, it is perhaps not surprising that Mrs. Macaulay's was not a portrait they were anxious to acquire.

³³Lynne E. Withey, 'Catharine Macaulay and the Uses of History, Ancient Rights, Perfectionism and Propaganda', *Journal of British Studies*, Fall 1976, 16(1): 59-83.

³⁴Donnelly, 'The Celebrated Mrs. Macaulay': 201.

But if the Board was anxious to prevent republicanism from infiltrating the Portrait Gallery, one would not expect to meet there a portrait of Catherine Macaulay's contemporary John Wilkes (1727-91), who published his own *Introduction to the History of England from the Revolution to the Accession of the Brunswick Line* in the same year, 1768, as Mrs. Macaulay first introduced hers. We find, however, that this notorious republican's portrait was welcomed into the Portrait Gallery as early as 1869 (NPG 284), when it was presented as a gift to the gallery by Trustee William Smith. It is a small but highly finished pencil drawing, showing the sitters' full length in a dignified pose with the head turned in neo-classical profile. The drawing would not have attracted terrific attention in a gallery of full-blown canvasses, but it was there nonetheless - along with, after 1892, that of Thomas Paine (NPG 897). If Catherine Macaulay was jilted because of her political colours, it seems to have been because they were shown by a woman.

Catherine Macaulay defied the conventions of feminine behaviour within polite society, both in her tenacious politics and in her social life. Her writing stepped out of the bounds of feminine familiarity which have in the past, and do still sometimes shape women's historical writing.³⁵ She was affiliated with the male discussion circles to which her politician brother belonged, and when in her late forties and mid-way through the publication of her *History*, made what was regarded as an improvident marriage with a man not yet twenty-two. Although William Graham proved a loyal spouse, society was scandalised and it cost her much of her intellectual credibility in Britain.³⁶ The ostensible social incompetence of her marriage seems to have contributed to a reputation for her incompetence as a writer, and was used to affirm derogatory assessments of her work.³⁷ Independent of genteel femininity in her thought, and in her conduct, her historical celebrity was consequently thought insufficient for the National Portrait Gallery's collection of women authors.

The career of Lady Sydney Morgan in the world and in the National Portrait Gallery makes an instructive contrast to that of Catherine

³⁵See Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Gender and Genre: Women as Historical Writers, 1400-1820', in Labalme, ed. *Beyond Their Sex*: 153-182.

³⁶Donnelly, 'The Celebrated Mrs. Macaulay': 187-90.

³⁷Kate Davies 'Living Muses: The Politics of Embodiment 1750-1780', M.A., University of York, 1995: 35-56.

Macaulay, although her portrait was similarly excluded from the Gallery. Her most well-known work was in the more conventionally feminine genre of the epistolary novel. The plot of *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) revolves around a conventionally emotive love story, complete with dramatic finale occasioned in part by the revelation of hitherto concealed identities. If the novel is conventional in its plot, it is unusual in its explicit use of the characters and their roles as a metaphor for the political relationship between the Irish and the English, and the plot offers an optimistic model for the resolution of the conflict between nations. One element of that resolution is the awakening of English respect for Irish culture, a process which is the subject of most of the letters: the protagonist is constantly sketching his praise of Irish culture, praise which he defends by referring to Irish links with the Classical world. Much more than a love story, Lady Sydney Morgan's *The Wild Irish Girl* is a work of Irish cultural nationalism and of political speculation.

According to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, *The Wild Irish Girl* was initially refused by Sydney Owenson's (as she was then) publisher, due to its 'national sentiments'. Much of her later work was similarly informed, and her 1827 novel *The O'Briens and the O'Flahertys* is described as having 'vigorous emancipation sentiments'. These 'sentiments' - and one suspects the word was chosen to demote what was clearly a strong political commitment - are a possible cause of Lady Morgan's initial exclusion from the National Portrait Gallery. This is suggested by two things: one is that Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, another woman whose writing was informed by strong 'sentiments' on the Irish question (in this case Loyalist) was similarly excluded; another is that the portrait which was initially offered to the National Portrait Gallery found its home in the Irish National Portrait Gallery - a final location which was perhaps suggested by Stanhope's letter to Scharf which suggested that her portrait was not suitable for 'the chief National Collection'.³⁸ Even when clothed in the big skirts and lacy frills of a romance novel, or the piety of Charlotte Elizabeth's

³⁸Her portrait was offered to the Trustees' at their meeting of 9 February, 1865, by an imploring letter from the sitter's husband's second wife. In a letter to the Trustees dated 26 July 1864, M.A. Tonna insisted that Charlotte Elizabeth 'ought to be near Hannah More, who loved her *greatly*' Stanhope wrote in the book of offers 'already declined'. Trustees' correspondence and Offers book, NPG, London.

religious tracts, national politics were regarded by the National Portrait Gallery as an unsuitable sentiment for women's writing.

When Stanhope wrote to Scharf regarding the offer of Lady Morgan's portrait, he was able to cite her recent death as one reason to decline the portrait; but he added that 'I will not [illegible word] to avow my own opinion in which I daresay other Trustees may concur, that the fame of Lady M is much too slight - much too *flimsy* if I may so express myself, for the admission of her likeness into the chief National Collection.'³⁹ Possibly a guarded reference to the subject of her works explored above, Lord Stanhope's use of the word *flimsy* (his emphasis) seems to describe a difference or gap between the quality of her work and the degree of recognition she received for it: he implies that her reputation was built on weak foundations. It was, as he acknowledged by his careful word choice, an important determination for him to arrive at, because the source of her reputation was one to which the Portrait Gallery in other circumstances might have deferred: Lady Morgan was something of a 'beauty'.

Lady Morgan's fame was founded largely on her connections in aristocratic society, which delighted in her beauty, intelligence and wit. She began her life, as so many beauties have, in the humble world of Dublin theatrical society, but after the publication of *The Wild Irish Girl* she joined the household of the Marquis of Abercorn. Lady Abercorn encouraged her to marry the household surgeon, Thomas Morgan, and seems also to have arranged the knighthood which advanced Miss Sydney Owenson to the condition of Lady Morgan. Subsequent commissions for books allowed her to display her talents and win friends in society in London; France; and Italy. Following these successes, Lord Morpeth persuaded Lord Melbourne, then Prime Minister, to award Lady Morgan a controversially generous pension from the Civil List of three hundred pounds per annum in 1838, making her the recipient of the first literary pension awarded to a woman.⁴⁰ After these successes, she removed to London, where she ceased to write and passed her remaining days as 'a social figure'.

³⁹Stanhope to Scharf, 11 December 1859, Trustees' Correspondence, NPG, London.

⁴⁰Cross, *The Common Writer*: 83.

Lady Morgan's career, and to some extent her work, belonged to a pattern of female authorship which was despised in the latter nineteenth century. Hers was the kind of fame which accrued as much or more to the career of the beauty as it did to the career of the author, particularly for women of the Romantic era during which Lady Morgan lived, and which the Portrait Gallery liked to forget. Like her contemporaries Lady Blessington, Lady Caroline Lamb, and Lady Bury who were not included in the Portrait Gallery during the nineteenth century, Lady Morgan became a public figure through her attractions as a sociable woman as well as for her literary talents. The 'fashionable authoress' who made a career in what was a mixed and relatively libertine society, and made a living by her quick and superficial pen was famously satirized by Thackeray in 1840 as 'Lady Fanny Flummery'. This barbed attack on the pretensions of the fashionable writer had an unfortunate influence on subsequent representations of women writers, who continued to be ridiculed - most irritatingly by George Eliot - as 'silly novelists' of the fashionable mode whether the label was appropriate or not.⁴¹ It was probably this element of fashionable notoriety that Lord Stanhope chose to describe as 'flimsy' in his assessment of the career of Lady Morgan.

The bold women of this milieu are admirably illustrated by what may have been a drawing for the *Illustrated London News*, 'Women in Politics: Lady Blessington's Salon at Gore House, Kensington' which shows a number of the famous male and female authors of the period discussing politics under the eyes of a typical Regency beauty portrait, with a number of the *Book of Beauty* prominently in the foreground (figure 34). As observed in Chapter four on portraits of beauties, this relatively recent historical sway of the society beauty was being avoided by the National Portrait Gallery.⁴² Too close in the historical annals of society for the Portrait Gallery's comfort, the connotations of the luxurious and licentious lives of some of the Regency elite were strictly repressed. The women authors who fitted into this mold were as unwelcome as George IV's and William IV's mistresses: a 'silly novelist' gave an equally poor account of ladylike

⁴¹Cross, *The Common Writer*: 182-85.

⁴²Chapter four, section II.

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female scholarship as Dorothy Jordan did of the respectability of the royal family. This was not least because the characteristic portrait type of the early-nineteenth-century society author was also that of the beauty: such a portrait would connote sexual license, however staid the biographical and literary account that could be given of the authoress so depicted.

In the history of femininity constructed by the National Portrait Gallery, the authoress was the antithesis of the beauty, and was not represented in the fashion of beauties, although this was a popular portrait type during the period. Whereas the obscure Mary Davis (dancer and sometime mistress of Charles II) warranted the gallery's purchase of a collectible Lely (NPG 253) in 1867, the gift of eminently respectable author Caroline Fry's beauty-style portrait in 1889 was declined. A writer of educational and devotional works, Miss Fry too had her liaison with the King: six copies of her periodical *Assistant of Education* were ordered for his library.⁴³ Her portrait was painted by the Lely of the Regency, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and shows her in romantic fashion, gazing at the sky, with her handsome bare shoulders and neck the central feature. The Trustees recorded in their minutes that 'although greatly impressed with its merits as a Work of Art, [they] could not consider Miss Fry to come within the limits of Celebrity as laid down by their Rules.'⁴⁴ While this might have been perfectly true, one wonders whether Lawrence's meritorious but unsuitable representation influenced their assessment of Miss Fry's celebrity.

The Portrait Gallery did purchase a large oil of Harriet Martineau which was painted in 1833 by Richard Evans (1085). A fashionable portrait of its time, it shows Miss Martineau in a silky dress with the popular low (but not lowest) neckline and a sensually painted fur boa wrapped around her right shoulder and waist. She is smiling, but not in the enthusiastic and pleasing way of a Miss Fry: as a whole her expression is solemn, with serious eyes cast down. Her body sits solidly in the furniture, balanced by one elbow on the chair and her other hand stretched out and resting on the table. Evans was trained by Lawrence, but was either unable or unwilling to impart his

⁴³*Dictionary of National Biography*. Entry recorded under the name Mrs. Caroline Wilson.

⁴⁴Minutes of Trustees meeting 30 November 1889, NPG, London.
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mentor's air of careless abandon to this sitter: the portrait suggest a reticence appropriate for a woman described by the Gallery as 'a distinguished writer on subjects connected with philosophy, science, history and education' (though notably not a philosopher, scientist, historian or educator). It was perhaps the distinguished quality of this otherwise typical early nineteenth century portrait, as well as its being the only authentic portrait of Miss Martineau (apart from one in her family), that persuaded the Trustees to acquire it in 1897.

The power of the pictorial attributes, as well as the biographical ones, which served to signify the female author is revealed by the mis-identification of two portraits acquired early in the Portrait Gallery's history. NPG 64 was purchased by the Gallery in 1859, and is a late sixteenth century portrait of a woman wearing a lace cap and a high ruff; she is sitting with one hand resting on a table and the other placed demurely under her coat. This was initially identified as Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, author, patron and sister of the renowned poet Philip Sidney. During the twentieth century this portrait was re-identified as Mary Scudamore, not known particularly for anything. A more ironic instance of this kind of doggedness on the part of the Gallery was played out in the purchase of NPG 427 (figure 35) in 1876. Eminently authorish in the sitter's dress and her grasp of a small prayer book, it was originally identified as Lady Rachel Russell, a woman whose deep (royalist) loyalty, piety and general virtue was celebrated in the publication of her letters in 1773 - a volume which had reached its sixth edition as early as 1801.⁴⁵ The portrait was re-identified on the grounds of facial resemblance as Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland - mistress of Charles II and a woman, suffice it to say, without pretensions to learning - in 1892.

The refusal of portraits of authors which might have been confused with portraits of beauties, and the acquisition, but misidentification of portraits of beauties as portraits of authors, suggests how very important the aesthetics of the portraiture was to structuring the historical account of women in the National Portrait Gallery's collection. The Trustees did not only wish to represent women authors, they wished to represent women authors as a particular kind

⁴⁵*Dictionary of National Biography*. Entry under William Russell, Lord Russell 1639-1683.



Figure 35. After Godfrey Kneller, *Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland* (1640-1709), acquired as a portrait of Lady Rachel Russell
Canvas, ca. 1705, 124.5 x 101, NPG 427

of woman: chaste, modest, companionable, domestic. Sitters or portraits which confused or resisted that identity were omitted from the walls of the Gallery. How that collective image of the female author was expressed was especially crucial in the representation of contemporaries and near contemporaries, who defined the most advanced state of English femininity.

III. The an-aesthetics of intellect: inscribing an aesthetic of modern femininity

The choices of portraits of contemporary women authors had an important effect on the narrative of women in English history which was created within the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery. By far the greatest number of contemporary women represented in the collection were authors: they constituted the description of women in contemporary life. On five different occasions the Trustees voted to except the rule that a sitter must have been dead for at least ten years in order to admit their portrait: at least two thirds of the Trustees voted to accept portraits of Agnes Strickland (NPG 403, figure 45), George Eliot (NPG 669), Caroline Norton (NPG 729), Amelia Edwards (NPG 929), and Christina Rossetti (NPG 990) before their 'time' was up; they accepted in principle the sketch of Elizabeth Barrett Browning (NPG 322) seven years after her death.⁴⁶ This spate of exceptions stands as testimony to the Trustees' efforts to recognise the importance of literary women to nineteenth century national life. But it was a compliment that was always conferred with significant qualifications, ones that resisted the most dramatic and 'modernising' aspects of nineteenth-century women's work as writers.

As this collection was being formed, women's literary and artistic work was taking on a different significance from that represented by the 'lady' author. The greater efficiency with which writing entered the public realm through more effective technologies of publication and circulation produced problematic new roles for both female and male authors, although in different ways.⁴⁷ For women, these

⁴⁶The picture was not presented until May 1871, but had been accepted at the Trustees' meeting of 30 April 1868.

⁴⁷See Linda M. Shires, 'The Author as Spectacle and Commodity: Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Thomas Hardy', Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan, eds., *Victorian Literature and the Visual Imagination* (Berkeley and London: Facing Femininities: Chapter five

developments eroded the appearance of women's literary labour as an uneconomic and decorative element of their domestic and family life, and reduced the power of femininity to suitably clothe their labour. The Portrait Gallery seems to have been particularly uneasy about how to recognise these changes to women authors' work in their collection. The offer of author Camilla Toulmin's portrait, submitted with a clipping promoting her *Landmarks of A Literary Life* (published under the name Mrs. Newton Crosland, 1892) in which reviewer after reviewer praises the popular author's readable volume of reminiscences, was received without enthusiasm.⁴⁸ Nor were any of the 'hack' female novelists of the Minerva Press, the first great populist publishing house, admitted to the ranks of historical celebrities collected by the National Portrait Gallery.⁴⁹ The connotations of women's entry into the commodified and public world of nineteenth century publishing was resisted by the Portrait Gallery's choice of sitters, but also in the kinds of portraits that they collected, and by the way those portraits were presented in the gallery.

Contemporary women authors were distanced from these developments in writing and publishing in the Portrait Gallery's collection through a literal dematerialisation of their images: the impact of their physical presence was strictly minimised. The absence from the collection of the grand romantic oil portraits which were wildly popular in the early-nineteenth century is not only a denial of eroticised or provocative images to learned women; it represents what was in the collection a denial of sensuality, of materiality, in general. The ethereality of women writers' portraits is expressed in one way by the absence of particularised backgrounds in portraits of learned women, a pattern of imagery which is linked above with relegation to the enclosed environment, and might also be linked (as the classicising backgrounds of portraits of beauties discussed in Chapter four) to the departicularising and dehistoricising of sitters. But the ethereality of women's portraits was also expressed in the collection by their character as material objects.

University of California Press, 1995): 198-212; Mary Poovey, 'The Man of Letters Hero: David Copperfield and the Professional Writer', *Uneven Developments*. (London: Virago, 1989): 89-125; and Jonathan Freedman, *Professions of Taste: Henry James, British Aestheticism, and Commodity Culture*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

⁵²Correspondence for Trustees' meeting 30 April 1896, NPG, London.

⁴⁹Cross, *The Common Writer*: 168-174.

Sometimes smaller, usually in the minor media of drawing or watercolour, and often monochromatic, the collection particularly of nineteenth century women authors' portraits tended to literally ascribe them with a minimum of material presence.

Relative to the whole collection of portraits of women, an extremely high proportion of the portraits of learned women, particularly the contemporaries and near contemporaries, are in 'minor' media: watercolours; pastels; pencil sketches; busts; and miniatures make up fully one half of the collection. This is a particularly noticeable trend amongst the nineteenth-century women in the collection: George Eliot (NPG 669 & 1232); Elizabeth Barrett Browning (NPG 322); Christina Rossetti (NPG 990); Sarah Austin (NPG 672); Anna Maria and Jane Porter (NPG 1109 & 1108, respectively); and Mary Somerville (NPG 690); to name but a few, appear in the collection as the subjects of drawings. In 1898 even Lady Sydney Morgan (NPG 1177, figure 36) was entered into the Gallery, in the suitably 'flimsy' form of a hasty and inexact drawing of negligible proportions. Few works on paper would have survived from earlier periods, and their predominance in nineteenth century representation probably in part reflects the rising price of contemporary artists' work, and economical choices on the part of those who commissioned the portraits. But the Trustees' responses to offers of different portraits suggest that it was modesty of another sort that was at stake.

Twice in 1894 the Portrait Gallery received an offer of a portrait of Jane Porter, painted by G. Harlow, a painter of Regency beauties. A large full length of unspecified dimensions, it was probably the portrait which showed the attractive Miss Porter outdoors on a moonlit night, gazing up at the sky.⁵⁰ It was a popular image and engraved numerous times during the 1820s and 30s (figure 37). The original oil, offered for the extremely modest sum of five pounds, does not seem even to have been considered for admission to the National Portrait Gallery. However, in 1897, the Gallery was only too

⁵⁰See registry documents for NPG 1108. The picture is not fully described by S. Browne, the owner of the painting, and my identification of the image is based on the engravings of the full-length painting, apparently the only full-length of the sitter painted by Harlow. Since the painting itself has not been located, its precise dimensions are unknown.



Figure 36. William Behnes, *Lady Sydney Morgan* (1783? - 1859)
Pen and ink, date unknown, 18.4 x 22.9, NPG 1177

happy to purchase a small pencil sketch of the same lady, wearing the cross of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and dressed as a nun (NPG 1108, figure 38). The same preference for works on paper was expressed for even a major nineteenth-century novelist. A small (roughly 30 x 22 cm) panel painting, this one of a young George Eliot wearing a modest black dress against a green and scarlet ground, was rejected in 1881; only two years later they acquired their first picture of her, a chalk drawing (NPG 669).⁵¹

The portraits of relatively contemporary male authors were not subject to the same restriction of media. As with the portrait of Wordsworth discussed above, male authors were likely to be represented by substantive oil portraits in addition to others. Unlike his wife Elizabeth who until 1921 was represented in the Portrait Gallery only by a chalk drawing, Robert Barrett Browning was the sitter for a near life-sized oil portrait by Rudolph Lehmann (NPG 839) which was presented just a year after his death; it was joined five years later by a bust portrait painted by Watts (NPG 1001). Within three years of his death, Alfred Lord Tennyson was represented by a chalk drawing (NPG 970), a marble bust carved by Mary Grant after Thomas Woolner (NPG 947) and a canvas by Watts (NPG 1015). The contrast between the sombre dark oil portraits of the men and the light-grounds of the drawings of women created a highly visible gendered difference in the series of authors hung in the National Portrait Gallery.

The contrasts between the (female) portraits on paper and the (male) portraits in oil work on a number of levels. Between the 1840s and the 1890s men were most often painted in monochromatic scales, using simple flesh colours and black clothes on dark grounds: for example, G.F. Watts' portraits of his eminent contemporaries all conform to this convention, with Swinburne's wild ginger hair providing the only shock of coloured relief in the series. In the drawings, the women authors appear in a dark line on a light ground, a monochromatic style which inverts the light face and dark ground

⁵¹Offer 159 B/6, considered at the Trustees' meeting of 27 October 1881, NPG, London; the painting was sketched by Scharf, *National Portrait Gallery: The Notebooks of Sir George Scharf (1820-95)*, (microfilm reprint London: World Microfilms Publications, 1978), T.S.B. 29: 36.

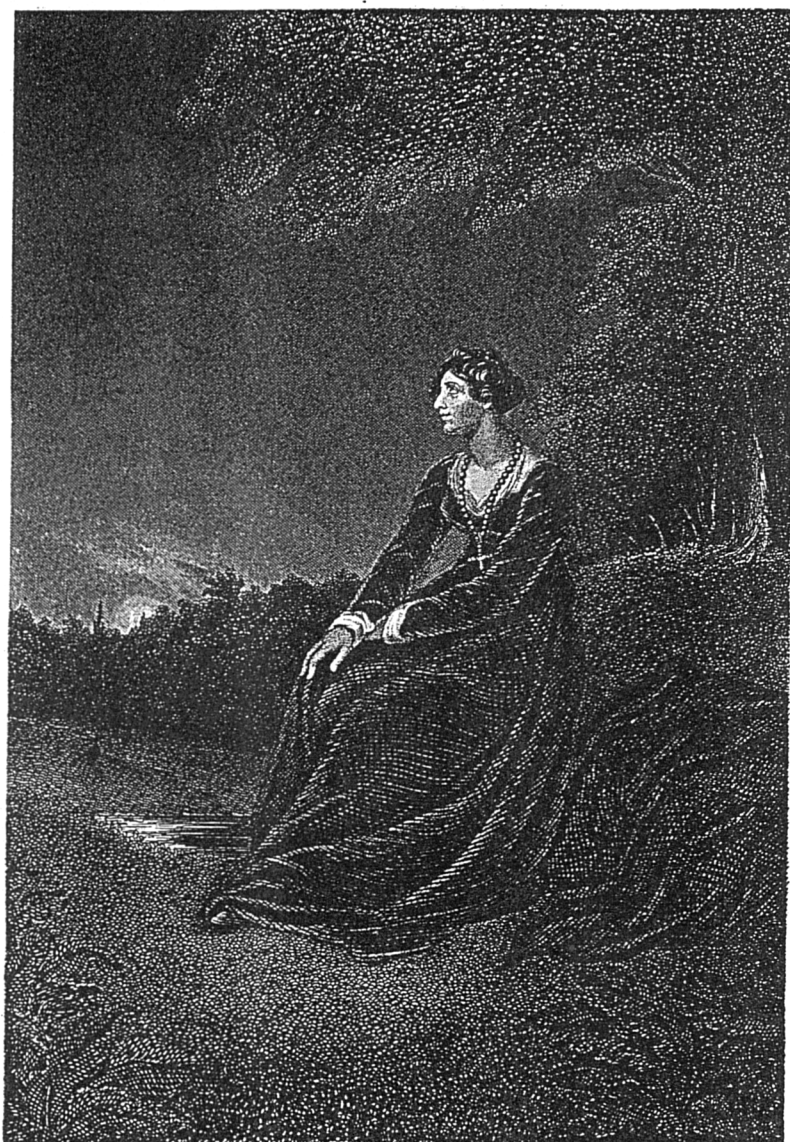


Figure 37. J. Thomson after G. Harlow, *Jane Porter* (1776-1850)
Engraving, published in *La Belle Assemblée*, 1825



Figure 38. George Henry Harlow, *Jane Porter* (1776-1850)
Pencil, date?, 21.6 x 17.1, NPG 1108

of the male oil portraits. The very startling contrast between the two media appears to especial effect, made more dramatic by the comparable sizes of the portraits in the group, in a photograph of the National Portrait Gallery at Bethnal Green, in which George Eliot and Elizabeth Barrett Browning are hung on a screen amongst their male colleagues (figure 4).

The effect of the domination of works on paper in the collection of portraits of contemporary women authors can be described in a number of ways. On the one hand there is a directness and liveliness to a drawing which lends an air of lively presence which an oil may not necessarily have. Lacking the illusionistic pretensions of a grand oil, a quick sketch may more effectively refer the viewer to their thoughts of the original model for the drawing, rather than the representation. The somewhat more abstracted quality of a sketch portrait, lacking as it does a rendering of natural colour or setting, might also be intended as a reference to the importance of the *immaterial* qualities of the sitter. The portrait of Elizabeth Barrett Browning entered in the Gallery was one to which she referred as representing her 'spiritual face'.⁵² The collection's emphasis on the light but direct rendering may be taken as a reference to the intellectual importance of learned women, one which reinforced the connections with the moral and spiritual life of the home which was inscribed in the representation of their dress and setting.

While it is affirming of the importance of such women to nineteenth-century culture to view the collection as a celebration of intellectual and spiritual life, this positive emphasis on women's mental accomplishments (if it was so) had other less celebratory implications. In, for instance, the portraits of queens, social and historical importance was linked with material importance - a material importance which was expressed in highly finished and minutely detailed formal oil paintings. The narratives of the Portrait Gallery were in part drawn using a visual hierarchy of the materiality of the representations: the size and finish of a portrait, and where it was hung in relation to other portraits, all worked to indicate the historical importance of the sitter. In comparison with the generally

⁵²William S. Peterson, "My Spiritual Face": A Newly Discovered Portrait of Mrs. Browning, (New York: The Browning Institute, 1977; reprinted from the Browning Institute Studies, 1977, Volume 5): 15.

larger, more densely worked images of men and queens, the informal and underfinished (and in the case of Lady Maria Callcott, NPG 954, unfinished) portraits of women authors recede in significance.

Just as importantly, the choices of media for representing women authors and artists worked within a hierarchy which functioned outside the Portrait Gallery as well as inside. Although late in the nineteenth century these hierarchies were being challenged, the relative importance of media in the context of national galleries was by and large clear: oil for substantive, professional work; watercolour, pastels, and drawings for preliminary work, work of secondary importance, or for amateurs. Works on paper were generally stored in drawers or portfolios, not exhibited on the walls of a national gallery: if hanging the chalks and drawings of women artists was an intervention in the hierarchy of media, it also worked to underline the association between women authors and the domestic or at least private or informal. The representation of women authors in secondary media linked them with amateur accomplishment in the arts which was understood to characterise women's participation in the literary world. One of two images of Sarah Austin collected by the Gallery made this relation explicit: NPG 598 was a portrait made of her by Lady Russell, a lady of some accomplishment, while the author stayed in her home. Offered by Lady Laura Russell on behalf of its anonymous owner, the Trustees hesitated to accept the offer until it was confirmed that it was Lady Russell herself who had made the painting.⁵³ This link between the use of media which connotated women writers with polite accomplishment in art could only serve to reinforce a conception of literary women which understood their work as domestic, decorative, and literally (paper vs. canvas) lightweight.

When the Portrait Gallery moved into its new, permanent building in St. Martin's Lane in 1896, the portraits were hung by the new Director, Lionel Cust, in a new way. The top floor of the north (main) wing was hung chronologically with portraits to the reign of George II; the two lower floors contained the modern portraits, representing figures from the late eighteenth century to the recent past, grouped

⁵³Scharf to Lord Arthur Russell, 2 August 1879; Lord Russell's reply Scharf 5 August 1879; correspondence filed in registry documents for NPG 598, NPG, London.

by fields of activity (occupationally).⁵⁴ Exceptional women in the eighteenth century arts, like Angelica Kauffman and Sarah Siddons, were hung with their peers; but many of the eighteenth century and almost all of the nineteenth century authors were defined in an occupational group of women.⁵⁵ In the 'screen room' on the first floor, described in the *Times* as a 'small room, not much more than an alcove',⁵⁶ were hung 'Female Portraits, Drawings, Sketches, &c.'. Here could be found the portraits of Mrs. Granville; Elizabeth Fry; Hannah More; Lady Callcott; Mrs. Trimmer; Agnes Strickland; Adelaide Proctor; George Eliot; Elizabeth Barrett Browning; and the Rossettis - along with, to the surprise of the reporter from the *Leeds Mercury* - Lady Hamilton. Referred to under the general heading of 'distinguished Englishwomen' by most of the reviewers, the acknowledgement of their contribution to national life was circumscribed by the National Portrait Gallery at St. Martin's Place as distinctly feminine.

IV. Femininity and history

The National Portrait Gallery's collection of women authors recognized women's literary production throughout the ages, but did so in a way that aggressively asserted their gendered difference as women, as well as representing them as writers. Insisting on conformist femininity was not an unusual response to women's changing roles in the nineteenth century: by and large, what changes there were were often rationalised on the grounds of women's special feminine expertise giving them useful resources in certain areas of 'public' work.⁵⁷ All but the most ardent of feminists (and indeed many of those) consciously attended to the matter of keeping their

⁵⁴See diagram in *Historical and Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures, Busts and c. in the National Portrait Gallery*, 11th edn., 1900.

⁵⁵This arrangement is reconstructed from press reviews of the new gallery as there is no detailed description of the hang in the records; the *St. James Budget* of 6 April 1896 and *Morning Post* of the same date give the locations of some women's portraits with those of their male peers; the reporter who wrote on the gallery for the *Leeds Mercury* of 6 April 1896 writes of all the women's portraits (including Angelica Kauffman's) as if they were in the same room.

⁵⁶*The Times*, 9 April 1896.

⁵⁷See, for instance, Jane Rendall, ed., *Equal or Different*. M. Jeanne Peterson gives a sympathetic account of women's work as part of the work of middle class professional families in *Family, Love, and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989): 145-161 on writing and artistic work in particular.

personal appearance strictly within fashionable conventions.⁵⁸ But even within these conventions, there was room for play and for discovering difference: women who engaged in challenging the limitations of their feminine intellect often chose images for themselves which marked out their modernity.

Portraits held by Girton College provides some instructive contrasts with the Portrait Gallery's collection.⁵⁹ Portraits of the women who were the leaders of this forward-thinking college for women show a self-conscious engagement with the traditions of portraiture exhibited in the National Portrait Gallery's collection of learned ladies. That engagement, however, can be construed as one of resistance. R. Lehmann's portrait of Emily Davies, first Mistress of Girton renders the image of the learned lady in a formal, dark oil portrait more typical of the portraits of male contemporaries collected by the Portrait Gallery. Shown to the waist against a very dim background, she wears the familiar black with white lace ruffs and cap, her face and hands (with the lace) are the only light parts of the portrait. The image she presents is a formidable one. She smiles ever so slightly, and gazes with a frank, almost confrontational directness at the viewer. This portrait of Emily Davies uses the conventions of representing the learned lady as coded in the Portrait Gallery, but places them in a context which makes gestures of resistance against the more demure aspects of that tradition.

The history of English femininity reached its apogee in the collection of women writers. Exemplary of the progress of English femininity, the portraits which represented women writers were carefully selected to give an impression of modern English women which seems to resist modernity: compared to the elegant and rarefied full-length portraits by Whistler and Sargent which were popular towards the end of the nineteenth century, the homely drawings of women artists must have seemed extremely quaint.⁶⁰ It is probably that they were intended to: these women were

⁵⁸See Katrina Rolley, 'Fashion, Femininity and the Fight for the Vote', *Art History*, 1990 13(1): 47-71.

⁵⁹I would like to give my great thanks to Kate Perry of Girton College for giving me a very informed tour of their portraits. A portrait of Barbara Bodichon from their collection is discussed in Chapter six, section IV.

⁶⁰Margaret Maynard, 'A Dream of Fair Women': Revival Dress and the Formation of Late Victorian Images of Femininity', *Art History* September 1989, 12(3): 322-41.

constructed by the National Portrait Gallery as part of a (literally) ancient and noble tradition of English women learning and writing as part of their domestic roles. Like Queen Victoria, women (rather, lady) novelists of the nineteenth century were represented as a polite force in the nation.

Even the most modern of women - women like George Eliot and Elisabeth Barrett Browning - could be co-opted into a 'tradition' of English femininity by nineteenth-century historiography. This created (and was intended to create) an appearance of a transhistorical exemplary English femininity. But this should not be mistaken for an assertion that femininity was *ahistorical*, or that women were not perceived as historical beings:⁶¹ as we have seen, the construction of this exemplary femininity depended for its articulation on the presence of other forms of femininity. The eroticised, transgressive beauty - even when she was an eminent author (like Sydney Morgan), or a virtuous queen (like Catherine of Braganza) - was alienated from the modern world, frequently through historicisation. If the authors represent a transhistorical ideal, they also represent a nation's historical progress.

⁶¹Asserted by, among others, Christina Crosby in *The Ends of History: the Victorians and the Woman Question*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1991). *Facing Femininities*: Chapter five

CHAPTER SIX

SEEING AND BELIEVING: FEMALE SPECTATORS AND FEMININE SPECTATORSHIP IN THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

If the National Portrait Gallery was primarily an address to the English man, a recounting of his own heroic history and passage to manhood, English women were also included and addressed as part of its nation. It has been argued in other works that the constitution of historical 'man' in nineteenth-century museums and historiographies required the production of an ahistorical 'feminine', a feminine which precluded the female visitor from imagining herself as part of the historical development represented by museum collections.¹ While it is clear that certain conventions about the nature of 'femininity' shaped the collection of the National Portrait Gallery, the historical narrative it constructed is not susceptible to an analysis based on the division of historical/ahistorical in terms of its treatment of gender.² Femininity was used to position the masculine historical condition - for example, the court of Charles II was marked as politically enervated in part by its representation as a court dominated by women - but the feminine which was represented in the National Portrait Gallery also had a historical narrative that can be identified and described independently from the masculine.³

That historical narrative seems to have been where the exhortatory and exemplary functions of the Portrait Gallery were located. The Portrait Gallery's narrative of the feminine was one

¹See Tony Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, (London: Routledge, 1995): 39; Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, (London: Routledge, 1995), especially pp. 102-132; Irit Rogoff, 'From Ruins to Debris: the Feminization of Fascism in German-History Museums', *Museum Culture*, Daniel J. Sherman and Irit Rogoff, eds., (London: Routledge, 1994): 223-249; Gaby Porter, 'How are women represented in British history museums?' *Museum*, 1991, 43(3):159-62. On nineteenth-century history in general see Christina Crosby, *The Ends of History*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1991) but with the reservations noted in the Introduction to this thesis.

²Racial or national 'others' functioned, in the context of the National Portrait Gallery, as the absent 'ahistorical' presence which positioned the English tradition as 'historical'. Benedict Anderson observes in 'Census, Map, Museum', *Imagined Communities*, (revised edition, London and New York: Verso, 1991): 163-86, that it was not accidental that imperialism and museums changed form and proliferated during the same period. As one of the tools by which imperial powers might create knowledge about their imperialised peoples and lands, the histories of museums are importantly linked with imperialism. English figures connected with imperial enterprises were included in the Portrait Gallery, but no non-British born figures were eligible: in the imperial context, the Portrait Gallery functioned to separate the colonised from colonising peoples. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill pursues these questions in 'Imag(in)ing the Heart of Empire: the First Decade of the National Portrait Gallery, London', M.S., unpublished paper 1995.

³The representation of women in the court of Charles II is explored mainly in Chapter three, section II.

designed to give English women a sense of the trajectory of the historical development in which they themselves were a part.⁴ Portraits were not collected only to offer models for imitation: the Trustees' rules for admission established that they would not 'consider great faults and errors, even though admitted on all sides, as any sufficient ground for excluding any portrait which may be valuable, as illustrating the civil, ecclesiastical, or literary history of the country.' The National Portrait Gallery did not exist as an incentive to imitate the past, but to promote, according to contemporary educationalist Sir Joshua Fitch, 'a rational patriotism founded on knowledge and on an affectionate and grateful recognition what has been done for us by our ancestors, and of the preciousness of the inheritance which they have left us.'⁵ The incentive to an exemplary English femininity in the National Portrait Gallery lies not simply in the recognition of individual exemplars, but in the sum of the narrative to which they contributed. The legacy, rather than the ancestors, was aspirational.

The narrative of English femininity identified in the previous three chapters of this thesis suggests that the nineteenth-century collection of the National Portrait Gallery was indeed intended to construct that sense of a 'legacy'. Royal women asserted the Englishness of a certain form of femininity, which surfaced irregularly in the early period but was identifiably present in the most contemporary queens and heirs. The elements which contributed to (or detracted from) that feminine identity were arrayed in the remaining portraits to suggest a historical progress toward that feminine ideal. In the 'beauties' we encounter an explicit or confrontational female sexuality, which was acknowledged but deliberately relegated to a distant past. In the representation of relatively contemporary Englishwomen (including Queen Victoria), it was the demure look and thoughtful piety of authors which was valorized, particularly in the context of the communal efforts of the family. It was the sum of this feminine progress in Englishwomen's lives for which visitors to the National

⁴Patrick Joyce, 'The constitution and the narrative structure of Victorian politics', James Vernon, ed., *Re-reading the constitution: New narratives in the political history of England's long nineteenth century*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996): 179-203.

⁵Sir Joshua Fitch, *The National Portrait Gallery*, (London: Eyre and Spottiswood, n.d.); reprinted from the *Educational Record*, June 1907: 15.

Portrait Gallery were meant to acquire an 'affectionate and grateful recognition'.

Previous chapters have examined in detail the forces which worked to produce particular (or a series of particular) constructions of femininity in the Portrait Gallery's collection. This chapter attempts a description of how the Portrait Gallery's collection might have produced that knowledge of femininity in its spectators, specifically its female spectators. It asks whether the National Portrait Gallery did in fact succeed in promoting an 'affectionate and grateful recognition' for the past and for their role in the present among nineteenth-century women. Section I of this chapter explores the evidence for women's use of the National Portrait Gallery, and compares it to the normative conditions under which a visitor was encouraged to interpret the collection. Although no direct statement was ever made about sexual difference and spectatorship, it is clear that women visitors were treated as a different constituency.

Hence the problem of how sexual difference affected the appreciation of portraits needs to be explored in a more explicit way than it has been thus far. Because in Chapter two of this thesis a male perspective was posited as the dominant (indeed exclusive) point of view taken in the administration of the nineteenth-century Portrait Gallery, a masculine form of looking at portraiture has been assumed in subsequent chapters.⁶ This process has reinscribed the assumption that a masculine view was normative, and feminine difference non-existent or not important. But I want to suggest here that exploring gendered difference in spectatorship is critical for a full assessment of the cultural work of the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery. Recognising that positing 'feminine difference' is itself highly problematic, this chapter takes some tentative and speculative steps towards imagining how women might have experienced the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery.

⁶This raises the question of the relationship between the interpretation of the Portrait Gallery developed in this thesis and the sex of the author, who is female. I consider myself to have had privileged access to the methods and tools of interpretation used by the Trustees of the nineteenth-century Portrait Gallery, to the extent that with respect to *my* relationship to those methods and tools, gender is moot, except insofar as I have simultaneously brought feminist criticism to bear on their results. The ways in which my reconstruction of the nineteenth-century male view might be inadequate is, I would argue, more a consequence of time than sex, although I think it impossible to distinguish between the work of those two differences.

Section II takes its cue from contemporary commentary about women's use of galleries to speculate about the possibility of a 'feminine' reading of the National Portrait Gallery. Section III takes the position that the discursive production of a feminine spectatorship did not represent a literal difference in women viewers (or at least one that can be known), but examines it as a rhetorical device which served to shore up conventions of masculinity. Both interpretations of feminine difference in spectatorship lead to the same conclusion: that the 'other' spectator, the feminine spectator, could not fully interpret or understand the Portrait Gallery's collection.

The logic of sexual difference which was inscribed in the collection could not be sustained to the point where it could actively produce the feminine subject who was the logical conclusion of its narrative: producing the feminine as 'other' also meant failing to produce the feminine in any coherent or meaningful way. Section IV pursues the theme of the instability of the feminine subject produced by the National Portrait Gallery by exploring a set of images which are dissonant with all the conventions of femininity observable in its nineteenth century collection: portraits, particularly self-portraits, of women artists. Not only do these portraits disturb the history of English femininity narrated in (and by) the Portrait Gallery's collection, but they also suggest a female spectator whose access to knowledge of the portrait was privileged, rather than foreclosed, by femininity. The portraits of women artists transgressed the Portrait Gallery's construction of the feminine, and threatened to undo the logic of sexual difference which structured the Portrait Gallery's nineteenth century collection.

I. Women as 'national' subjects: gender and the spectator in the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery

Clearly, the collection of the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery adopted and reproduced images and series of images that described gendered difference. The purpose of this chapter is to explore ways in which gendered difference might have affected the interpretation, as well as the construction, of the Portrait Gallery. Historians of museums and galleries have noted two important ways in which gender might have shaped a museum or gallery visit. One

way in which gallery visitors were sexually differentiated was through the convention of men reading the catalogue aloud to their female companions.⁷ This placed the female visitor under the instruction of her male companion, but his instruction (where it existed) could only interpret the collection itself, and historians have identified the collection as an important, and inescapable, source of the production of gendered difference for the museum visitor in the nineteenth (and indeed twentieth) century gallery and museum visitor.⁸ Such a proposition assumes that all visitors responded to and learned from the collection in the same way even if they learned different things, a proposition which seems obviously untenable, given that interests and previous knowledge will inevitably vary from one visitor to another. This chapter poses questions about how difference between the ways in which visitors responded to the collection of the National Portrait Gallery might have been structured by gender.

Asserting that women understood and assented to the gendered narrative constructed by the National Portrait Gallery rests on a long chain of assumptions about how women interpreted the portraits, and about what they deduced from their arrangement. The normative visitor or interpreter that has been posited throughout this thesis was understood to perform a series of cognitive processes that would permit them to develop an understanding of the National Portrait Gallery as a representation of English history. This description of the spectator's relationship to the collection has been based on historical evidence about what the Trustees and administrators intended for the normative visitor who attended the National Portrait Gallery. This normative visitor was, however, gendered male: 'there ought not,' Earl Stanhope suggested, 'to be in this collection a single portrait

⁷This practice is described in a very sensitively handled chapter on fine art spectatorship in the nineteenth-century, 'Viewing Ideal Sculpture: Contexts and Audiences', in Joy S. Kasson, *Marble Queens and Captives: Women in Nineteenth Century American Sculpture*, (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990): 21-45. A cartoon in *Punch*, June 22, 1872, V. 62: 253, titled 'Happy Thought - Division of Labour' makes a meal of the practice of men reading catalogues aloud, which suggests this was a transatlantic phenomenon. The gentleman speaks to his lady companion at an exhibition, 'A - look here, Miss Bonamy! S'pose you look at the pictures, while I confine my attention to the catalogue! Get through the job in half the time, you know!'

⁸Gaby Porter, 'Seeing through Solidity: a feminist perspective on museums', *Theorizing Museums*, eds., Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991): 105-126; Kasson, *Marble Queens and Captives*; Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*: 201-208; and Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*: 102-132.

as to which *a man* of good education passing round and seeing the name in the catalogue would be under the necessity of asking, "who is he".⁹ The cognitive processes which were mobilised around portraiture, in the development of the Portrait Gallery (described in the first two chapters of this thesis) were produced within a set of exclusively male institutions, and organised for male viewers.

If the normative visitor was male, however, the actual visitor seems just as likely to have been female. There is little in the way of empirical evidence about visitors to the National Portrait Gallery, but what there is suggests that women were an important constituency. A survey of extant visitors' books for the National Portrait Gallery shows that women signed themselves into the gallery occasionally alone, sometimes in parties of two or more; presumably women were included in the parties signed in by men.¹⁰ When Scharf left instructions regarding the admission of visitors to see portraits being kept at the Westminster offices of the Gallery during the Bethnal Green years, he added that 'the same will apply to lady visitors:' if lady visitors were an afterthought, they were an afterthought on equal footing.¹¹ Sometimes lady visitors were more than an afterthought: Scharf's report to the Chairman on the visitors to the Gallery on 10 April 1871 (Easter Monday, a working class holiday) included the remark that 'a very large proportion of the visitors today were women, and most of them had babies in their arms.'¹² The names of women, in partnership with their husbands or on their own, appear on the invitation lists for the Portrait Gallery's private views.¹³ An unexpected visit from the Queen of the Netherlands

⁹*Hansard*, 3d series, V. 140, c. 1778. This was quoted again by Sir Joshua Fitch in his pamphlet. My italics.

¹⁰Visitors books were kept at the Great George Street gallery after 1860, when the ticket system was dispensed with and any 'respectable looking' person was admitted. This was presumably an effort to keep a numerical record of attendance, which was recorded in the Trustees' Annual Reports. The books were dispensed with after the move to South Kensington, where turnstiles were installed at the entrance. Because not all the names of all the members of each party were recorded, it's not possible even to roughly calculate the proportion of women among the visitors. Eighteen (18) of 74 visitors on 25 February 1860 were identifiably female; only 8 women are identifiable among 143 visitors on 7 September 1864. Visitors Books, NPG, London.

¹¹Scharf, memorandum to staff, 6 August 1888; Trustees' correspondence, NPG, London.

¹²Scharf to Stanhope, 10 April 1871, Trustees' correspondence, NPG, London.

¹³A special private view of a rehang at the South Kensington Gallery was held on 30 September 1871: 8 of 194 invitations issued by Scharf were addressed to women; one of those was among the 29 invitations collected and preserved.

caused the doorman to dispatch an excited record of her visit to Scharf immediately upon her departure.¹⁴ These are scant records, but they offer evidence that women of all classes made use of the National Portrait Gallery.

Opportunities to visit the gallery were shaped by the opening hours, admission charges, and the location of the gallery.¹⁵ However, once the opportunity to enter the Portrait Gallery had been taken, women and men were apparently encouraged to visit in the same manner, and to engage in the normative interpretation of the Gallery as understood and promoted by the Trustees. This normative interpretation can be characterised by Elaine Scarry's analysis of 'imagining under authorial instruction,' in which an effect of vivacity is created through the precise direction of the reader/viewer's imagination.¹⁶ The effect of the portrait's vivacity (the sitter's presence) in the National Portrait Gallery was implied in the common currency of portrait appreciation, which treated the portrait as a substitute for the sitter; it was cultivated by the arrangement of the portraits, which were arrayed in a spatial analogue of historical narrative; and it was supported by the practices and objects which circulated around the Gallery, such as catalogues and antiquarian studies.¹⁷ What was being engineered by the choice of portraits and

Between 1865 and 1868 Chairman Stanhope, Trustee William Smith and Scharf issued 32 private view cards which were used and preserved; 16, or half of them, were issued to women. Private views, NPG, London.

¹⁴Doorman James Lees wrote to Scharf on 1 July 1875 at 4:00 pm, too excited for punctuation: 'I have to inform you that the Queen of the Netherlands came to the Gallery this afternoon at about 10 minutes to 4 o'clock and is now in the Gallery seemingly much interested in the Portraits one Gentleman and two Ladies are with the Queen the Gentleman has taken two lists of the Portraits they seem not to wish to be known and paid for admission at the entrance. The Police sergeant [sic] saw them at the East India Museum on Tuesday or we should not have known them. There are not many people in the Gallery and those do not seem to notice the Queen so that they escape being mobbed. The Queen has just left 4.40.' Trustees' correspondence, NPG, London.

¹⁵Physical access to the Gallery is the main concern of Chapter one, section II.

¹⁶Elaine Scarry, 'On Vivacity: The Difference Between Daydreaming and Imagining-Under-Authorial-Instruction', *Representations*, Fall 1995, 52: 1-26.

¹⁷The 'common currency' of portrait interpretation was characterised perceiving a portrait as a literal and direct representation of the sitter; this often implied that their personality, as well as their appearance, was 'present' in the portrait. See Paul Barlow, 'The Imagined Hero As Incarnate Sign: Thomas Carlyle and the Mythology of the National Portrait in Victorian Britain', *Art History* 1994, 17(4): 517-545; the confidence in the representational value of portraiture was tied up with contemporary notions of historicism and authenticity, discussed in Chapters one and two of this thesis. Catalogues with biographical entries were published by the National Portrait Gallery beginning in 1860 and throughout the century. 'Gratis Lists' which

by the arrangement of the collection was the most convincing possible illusion of a series of encounters with the sitters for the portraits, a series of encounters which were ideally experienced in chronological order. The effect of these strategies was to construct through biographical reference a narrative history of the 'significant' passages of English history.

If there is no direct evidence that women spectators were understood to interact with this vivacious spectacle of history in a way which differed from the normative, there is quite a lot of corollary evidence which implies that women (and children, and the 'working classes') were perceived to have a different relationship to galleries and museums. When officials gave testimony at Royal Commissions about the use of galleries, they often commented on the presence of families or women with children, frequently dismissively. It is said, however, that women were understood to play an important role in the audience for galleries and museums: as institutions of social education, the presence of middle-class women was required for its 'softening' effect, on both the working-class women and men being socially educated through their visit.¹⁸ A public space where social intercourse was regulated by the conventions of looking at exhibitions and the presence of authorities who could enforce 'appropriate' behaviour, women's attendance at galleries was both accepted and encouraged. But women's visits were evidently not encouraged for the purposes of a woman's own intellectual edification.

Whether or not the institutions' reasons for encouraging a female audience shaped their experience there, nineteenth-century women seem to have had their own motivations for visiting galleries and museums. Galleries and museums were some of the few public spaces freely available to urban middle class women of the period, and it seems they made use of them.¹⁹ Reasons for their visits might

showed the name of the sitter, her or his occupation, and the painter and date of the portrait only were published until 1881 when another full edition of the catalogue were produced. By this time, many of the portraits had labels which included short biographies of the sitter, which the Trustees felt were adequate instruction. See minutes of Trustees meetings 24 March and 27 September 1886, NPG, London.

¹⁸Bennett; *The Birth of the Museum*: 28-33.

¹⁹See Paula Gillett, *Worlds of Art: Painters in Victorian Society*, (New Brunswick: Rutgers U.P., 1990): 237/38; also Lynn Walker, 'Vistas of pleasure: women consumers of urban space in the West End of London 1850-1900', in *Facing Femininities*: Chapter six

include the pursuit of studies or the pursuit of pleasure, both aesthetic pleasures and the pleasures of life in the public eye: in galleries women might well have been able to adopt the position of *flâneuse*.²⁰ The few historians who have explored women's use of museums and galleries remark on the importance of the social capital invested in an acquaintance with current exhibitions and art-world news.²¹ So not only was gallery visiting a satisfying and uncontentious pursuit for women personally, but their personal pleasure could be converted into a sense of their satisfying social obligations. While working-class women might take pride in their pursuit of 'rational recreation,' or of using galleries for their own (unapproved) purposes, middle-class women acquired the knowledge and conversation necessary for the pursuit of social status within their own community.

The next two sections of this chapter ask whether the ways that women used the Portrait Gallery supported or disrupted the cognitive processes of the normative visitor being promoted by its administration; in other words, how gendered difference shaped the way that visitors 'experienced' the National Portrait Gallery. This question invokes the stickiest problem of so-called cultural history, the question of how individuals adopt and adapt to changing forms of cultural practice. That the 'experience' of a picture, gallery, or film is shaped by the way the spectator is positioned by that picture, gallery or film has been recognised by feminist and other critics for twenty years, although what analytical tools are appropriate for describing or analysing those positions is a highly contested question.²² One of the

Women in the Victorian Art World, ed. Clarissa Campbell Orr (Manchester: M.U.P., 1995): 89-106.

²⁰While making the important point that middle-class women were excluded from the spaces considered to be exemplary of 'modernity' - the spaces of the *flâneur* - a long footnote to Griselda Pollock's influential essay 'Modernity and the spaces of femininity', *Vision and Difference: Femininity, feminism and histories of art* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988): 54, engages with the question of the woman spectator in the gallery as the required subject for the 'shock' of modernity carried by paintings such as Manet's *Olympia*. There is a suggestion in this of the gallery giving access - albeit access at one remove - to the 'modern' world of the *flâneur*. Galleries were a circumscribed site of 'modern' life, but enjoying the spectacle of other people as well as looking at art was an important aspect of attending exhibitions.

²¹See Paula Gillett, *Worlds of Art*: 237, and Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society, Etiquette and the Season*, (London: Cresset Library, 1986).

²²One genealogy of the history of gender and spectatorship in feminist theory begins with Laura Mulvey's well-known 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', published originally in the film studies journal *Screen* and reproduced many times. Barbara Creed provides a good survey of the debate it

important developments in this field of study is the recognition that while a 'spectacle' may work to produce a certain response in audiences, those audiences are unpredictable and unreliable.²³ The audience's ability to alter or reject the spectacle's propositions through thoughtful consideration, fantasy, misunderstanding, or sheer bloody-mindedness will vary its responses. What follows then is a necessarily speculative, but hopefully instructive, attempt to gender spectatorship in the nineteenth-century Portrait Gallery.

II. Women's ways of looking (one)

The following reading of feminine difference among women visitors to the National Portrait Gallery takes its cue from the reviewer for the *Housewife* who visited the new National Portrait Gallery in St. Martin's Place in 1896. The review submitted concluded, 'I am fain to confess that gazing at thousands of portraits has rather a depressing influence on me. I was not well up enough in history, I fear, and the chief feeling I brought away was of another vanished illusion.'²⁴ Vanished illusion is a suggestive description of the effect of moving through the Portrait Gallery with the desire, but without the resources, to animate the figures represented there: it speaks to the lack of fulfillment of the expectation generated by the *apparent* presence of the sitters. For those without the resources of Stanhope's 'educated man', or for those who rejected his approach to portraiture, the first principle of the National Portrait Gallery - that the visitor would encounter the sitter through her portrait - did not necessarily hold. Although the responses of such visitors are not documented as securely as the structure of the normative visit, the possible consequences of visiting the National Portrait Gallery with a different

opened in her introduction to *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader in Sexuality*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992): 1-11; see also Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: feminism, film theory, psychoanalysis*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991); a recent bibliography of material on spectatorship from media, film and television studies compiled by Ellen Furlough is to be found in Victoria de Grazia, with Ellen Furlough, eds. *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, (London, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996). For a relevant account of problems of gendered spectatorship in the guise of 'reception theory' in literary studies, see the introduction to Lynn Pearce, *Woman/Image/Text*, (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991):1-25; also Jonathan Culler in *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982).

²³See, for example, Susan J. Douglas, 'Notes Toward a History of Media Audiences', *Radical History Review*, 1992, 54:127-138. Much of the literature referred to in the previous footnote is also concerned with contested readings.

²⁴*The Housewife*, May 1896, n.p., preserved in *New Building*, NPG, London.

ambition are explored here as a visit informed by feminine difference.

What the reviewer for the *Housewife* experienced as a feeling of 'vanished illusion' can today be construed as a misinterpretation through patriarchy of her own 'feminine' mode of producing meaning. Lacking the historical knowledge which the portraits were intended to animate, the portraits remained unanimated.²⁵ This defeated the purpose and pleasures of the visit, or might have, if alternative meanings and pleasures were not available.²⁶ One supposes that even those lacking the detailed historical education hoped and tried to gain something from their visit. For some, that pleasure may have been limited to being in a dry building on a wet day, or a shaded one when hot: certainly this was how some National Gallery officials interpreted the intentions of those who did not attend to the pictures in a conventional way. Or, the gallery visit could be inflected by 'feminine difference,' and enjoyed in a different way than that expounded by Carlyle and the other early Trustees. What follows is an attempt to use late twentieth century feminist theory and evidence about nineteenth century women's use of the gallery to generate an alternative explanation of nineteenth century women's enjoyment of the National Portrait Gallery.

²⁵The portraits were rarely permitted to challenge or substitute for the officials' views of the nature of a historical character: they were treated rather as testimony to literary reportage. Although some effort was made to educate the visitor through the catalogue biographies or the signs for each portrait, the detail given was often scant. When the Bishop of Bedford wrote to suggest that catalogues be hired to gallery visitors, Scharf replied that the Trustees declined his suggestion, preferring 'to leave it to the frequenters of the gallery to draw their own conclusions', Scharf to the Bishop of Bedford, 30 September 1886: Trustees correspondence, NPG, London. This letter reveals Scharf at his most disingenuous: the Trustees were influenced in this reply by the location of the Gallery at Bethnal Green, where they considered the collection wasted and more or less disinherited it. See Chapter one.

²⁶This is not to say that no pleasures of that sort were available even to the meagrely educated. Certain figures represented in the National Portrait Gallery did not require a bookish introduction: the number of female Restoration portraits wrongly identified in the nineteenth century as Nell Gwyn attests both to her notoriety and the power of her iconography; the same is true of 'Goode' Queen Anne, whose (false) portrait was offered to the Gallery innumerable times. The subjects of popular knowledge were sometimes surprisingly obscure: Scharf reported in his letter to the Trustees of 10 April 1871 that 'Dr. Jenner although now placed very high and in an unfavourable light did not escape frequent observation. A woman pointing to it said to her girls, "Here's the one that's making such a lot children suffer now for vaccination."'

An essential step in the normative National Portrait Gallery visit sketched above is the formation of a sense of the sitter represented in the portrait as an individual and separate human being, with her own particular biography and character. One was required to imagine that individual as an 'other,' and confront their particularity as different from one's own. That is precisely the process that collapses when the historical knowledge, the 'authorial instruction', necessary to animate the portrait is wanting. The failure to fully animate the 'other' was a disruption to the formation of meaning for the visitor; or so it would appear in the context of the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery. Late twentieth-century feminist theory has developed a different perspective on an epistemology which fails to fully differentiate the subject: it is now almost a commonplace of various kinds of feminist theory that this 'failure' is a positive characteristic of 'feminine' thinking and behaviour.²⁷ The evidence about the contexts and purposes of nineteenth-century women's gallery visits suggests this would be an appropriate way of describing (some) women's encounters with the National Portraits.

What I am proposing is that there was more than one imaginative process by which a visitor might make sense of the relationship between the portraits, what they represented, and herself. Instead of confronting an animated 'other', she would encounter a figure with whom she formed *some* kind of identification, or at any rate, could not totally differentiate. The visitor would look to the portrait not to establish its difference from herself, but its sameness, or at least potential points of likeness. For an Englishwoman, the Portrait Gallery already invited at least one point of identification with all the sitters represented: nationality. Identification with female sitters would have redoubled its strength on the basis of sex, which was then, as now, a strong element in the formation of identity and imagined opportunity. The visitor who traversed the National Portrait Gallery looking for elements of common experience,

²⁷See Lynn Pearce in *Woman/Image/Text*, both for her own construction of a similar proposition and her further references, 16-22. Much of this work is articulated through psychoanalysis, and Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger has theorized this visual epistemology in Lacanian terms in *The Matrixial Gaze* (Leeds: Feminist Arts and Histories Network, 1995). Rosemary Betterton works with a similar model of the relation between work and (female) viewers of contemporary women's art in *An Intimate Distance: Women, Artists and the Body*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996): she writes on the first page of a self-portrait of Suzanne Valadon before which 'the viewer completes a circuit which leaps the gap between self and other.'

behaviour, or ambition with the sitters represented in the portraits would have had a very different experience than the visitor who was able and willing to make the portraits into animated 'others'. If it was indeed the case that some women visiting the National Portrait Gallery found themselves using that 'feminine' mode of interpreting the portraits, they would have a profoundly different experience of the Gallery.

Proposing a different experience of visiting for women which was premised on a 'feminine' mode of viewing is, if not demonstrable, at least consistent with the contexts in which middle-class women used the Gallery. Young (middle-class) women were constantly in the process - especially within the context of trips to the art gallery - of making their own identities through appearance. Ann Bermingham has cleverly described the gendered differentiation of men and women within the culture of connoisseurship, one which would have operated to some extent amongst families which used galleries in the nineteenth century.²⁸ Bermingham describes the perfect awareness that women were made to feel of themselves as the objects, rather than the subjects, of aesthetic pleasure. Then as now, women lived with a heightened sense of their own aesthetic existence, one which must be cultivated and preserved with hairdressing, cosmetics, and fashionable clothing. On this level, women had an ontological status equal to that of the portraits, as objects contrived for their aesthetic value: that status would have been reinforced by its production through the male gaze, which appraised the beauty of portrait or woman alike from the same 'disinterested' position. Perhaps aware of 'surreptitious comparisons' being made between herself and the portrait of Lady Hamilton or Harriet Martineau, a woman might form a competitive relationship with the portraits. The aesthetic appraisal of women worked to construct a relation of similarity between women and the portraits.

For one woman visiting the National Portrait Gallery, the personal beauty represented by the portraits was the main object of her interest: the *Daily Chronicle* reported a female visitor to have 'disparagingly remarked that in all her life she had never seen the

²⁸Ann Bermingham, 'The Aesthetics of Ignorance: The Accomplished Woman in the Culture of Connoisseurship', *Oxford Art Journal*, 1993, 16(2): 3-20.
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portraits of so many plain people collected together.’²⁹ The temptation to use the National Portrait Gallery as a series of models of personal beauty would have been heightened for women by the contexts in which many of them used the gallery: that is, its being one more of the shopping and social errands that occupied their daily lives.³⁰ Jeannette Marshall’s diaries of a middle-class London adolescence and young womanhood record days filled with sewing, shopping trips, social calls and sometimes gallery visits.³¹ It was a life spent in an almost constant attention to the cultivation of an attractive personal appearance, both on a physical and social level. Particularly after the Portrait Gallery moved to St. Martin’s Place in 1896, it was placed at the centre of the social and commercial world which women like Jeannette Marshall inhabited, and the gallery visit may well have been structured by that location. The temptation to compare the lace just bought with the lace on Elizabeth I’s cuffs must have been very great indeed.

The relationship between the ‘consuming’ gaze exerted in museums and galleries, and gaze which was ‘serious’, was one noticed with concern by nineteenth-century museum and gallery officials. They were all too aware of the similarities between the museum or gallery exhibition and the exhibition of consumer wares, and feared that their similarity invited a ‘trivial’ use of ‘serious’ exhibitions.³² The National Portrait Gallery’s exhibitionary regime of chronological order and modest surroundings resisted association with the spectacular display of the commercial gallery or department store, but its move

²⁹*Daily Chronicle*, April 6, 1896: np; press clipping in *New Building*, NPG, London.

³⁰Erika Rappaport discusses women’s use of the day and the West End in *Shopping For Pleasure: Gender, Commerce and Public Life in London’s West End 1860-1914*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, forthcoming 1999).

³¹Zuzanna Shonfield mapped Jeannette’s use of London streets for shopping and other errands. During Jeannette’s young womanhood in the 1870s, Charing Cross Road would have been ‘out of bounds’ due to the neighbourhood being dominated by men’s clubs, theatrical venues, and general disorder; in the following decades ‘improvements’ opened the streets and created links with more fashionable areas. See Chapter 3, ‘Provincial and Metropolitan Hazards’, *The Precariously Privileged: A Professional Family in Victorian London*, (Oxford & New York: O.U.P., 1987): 38-52. Most of the ‘hotspots’ on Lynne Walker’s map of women’s use of the West End of London are, however, marked north and west of Soho, leaving a wide berth for men to occupy the environs of Trafalgar Square: see ‘Vistas of pleasure’: 72.

³²I owe very great thanks to Carol McKay of Goldsmith’s College, University of London, for sharing her unpublished paper of 1996 on the subject of the museum spectator’s gaze: ‘Museums, curators and the mere “snapper up of unconsidered trifles”: some nineteenth-century debates’, M.S.

to St. Martin's Lane brought it within the geographical scope of important shopping districts like Regent Street, Oxford Street, and New Bond Street. Fashionable shopping was complemented by fashionable display, and art galleries and museums were a natural extension of Hyde Park and New Bond Street as a venue for the performances of social competence. The anxieties of the guardians of the 'serious' use of museums and galleries were probably very well founded indeed. In the case of the National Portrait Gallery those anxieties were probably not so much connected with the commodities displayed (although portraits were not entirely immune to association with the urge to consume) than with the practices of social display which were supported by consumerism.

In *The Primrose Path* (1878), Mrs. Oliphant has the female protagonists, Mrs. Bellingham and her charge, stop in London 'for a few days to "do some shopping," perennial necessity which haunts every mortal, and "to see the exhibitions." Nobody in society could avoid doing this. Whether you care for them or not, it was indispensable.'³³ Mrs. Bellingham's motive was to shore up her dinner party conversation, but their visit to the Royal Academy was also the scene of an unexpected meeting with her young friend's unwanted suitor. Many of the art exhibitions or galleries of the latter part of the nineteenth century were the venues for important social exchanges as well as 'artistic' ones. The Royal Academy annual exhibitions and the Grosvenor Gallery shows in particular afforded opportunities for casual meetings which might renew old acquaintances or introduce new ones. This aspect of gallery visiting would, again, make women super-conscious of their appearance. It was at the private view at the Royal Academy that Mrs. Humphry Ward staged the 'entrance' of her protagonist Miss Bretherton into London society, where her beauty captures the attention of Kendal: 'it is an intoxicating possession for a woman, such beauty as that; it's like royalty; it places the individual under conditions quite unlike those of ordinary mortals.'³⁴ In such a public place as a gallery, one's beauty might (like that of a picture) make an impression on a stranger.

³³Cited from F. Alan Walbank, ed. *Queens of the Circulating Library: Selections from Victorian Lady Novelists*, (London: Evans Brothers Limited, 1950): 103.

³⁴*Miss Bretherton*, (1884): cited from Walbank, ed. *Queens of the Circulating Library*: 270.

Although Miss Bretherton is American, Kendal uses the concept of royalty - social status - as a simile with which to describe the impact of her physical appearance. And it is precisely this relationship between appearance and status which was the concern of the National Portrait Gallery. Notable particularly in the collection of royal women is the way that the portraits explicitly signified social status, and that the collection as a whole was concerned to visually express the 'historical' importance of the sitters. For the young middle-class women who visited the collection, the portraits reinforced a principle of Englishness of which every aspect of their visit conspired to make them acutely aware: that their importance, their status, their identity, was intensely bound up with their physical appearance. But with that awareness comes another, which is that the physical appearance of status is manipulable, is costume. One cannot study femininity in any fashion for long without coming to the realisation, conscious or unconscious, that one is engaged in the study of costume, not clothing. The same is true of portraiture. That apprehension profoundly alters the meaning of the 'visit' to the National Portrait Gallery.

The different experience of the gallery would of course originate in the different experience of the portraits. Just as the experience of every portrait constituted completely as an 'other' is particular to each portrait, and unique for each visitor, the experience of every portrait constituted as an 'incomplete other' would vary for each visitor: an encounter with the portrait of Nell Gwyn might evoke a sense of fond sympathy between the sitter and the viewer's feelings for their (straying) partners; a woman might see in Bess of Hardwick's unsmiling countenance an affirming image of her own household absolutism. These kinds of responses to portraits are no more or less illusory than responses which animate their 'otherness'; but the consequences of imagining that the portraits were experienced as 'incomplete others' bears importantly on reconstructing the experience of the visit as a whole. If a visitor went through the National Portrait Gallery imaginatively exchanging certain elements of her identity with all, or even some, of the sitters represented there, she would emerge with a very different sense of 'Englishness.'

A substantive shift in the overall assessment of the Gallery would result from this alternative form of engaging with the portraits. Identification with the sitters would provide little sense of a historical narrative: whatever narrative was perceived by such a visitor would be constantly disrupted by affirmative exchanges with the sitters. The 'Englishness' represented by the National Portrait Gallery would be constituted as a sum of the characters there represented, rather than as the logical conclusion of their lives in series. Instead of a legacy, the Englishwoman's ancestors would offer her a vast wardrobe of identities and habits to occupy. An (admittedly late twentieth-century) reviewer responded in just such a way to one National Portrait Gallery exhibition. The reviewer for the *Times* found that the exhibition 'The Masque of Beauty' (National Portrait Gallery, 1972) offered 'plenty of scope for surreptitious comparison' between herself and England's great 'beauties'. Contemplating the ladies from the court of Charles II caused her to reflect that, although she was taught that success came from being her own 'master', 'in fact a great many women have done very well for themselves by diametrically opposed tactics.'³⁵ Even in 1972 this visitor saw the legacy of the past represented by the National Portrait Gallery as a range of possibilities to be taken, rather than those already discarded.

III. Women's ways of looking (two): gender and the politics of spectatorship

My proposition that an alternative form of 'looking' was one which inflected the experience of nineteenth century women visitors has so far been largely speculative, and one which can be construed, through another version of feminist theory, as constituting a repetition of a description of 'women's looking' that was itself produced in the nineteenth century. The evidence cited above elides several types of viewers into one type, mainly young women from the middle classes upwards. Although the observations of gallery administrators (including Scharf) about their visitors frequently included references to working-class women, nothing has been done in the way of researching the use that such women made of museums and galleries, or what pleasures and benefits they hoped would accrue to them

³⁵Prudence Glynn, 'Meeting the Great British Beauties', *The Times*, Tuesday 11 July 1972: 9.

from visiting such institutions.³⁶ The discussion above also has equal plausibility as a description of the way that another kind of visitor - men - might have made use of galleries. The erasure in the evidence of differences *between* women, and the erasure of male participation in the social and fashionable consuming gaze, suggests that different descriptions of portrait spectatorship may be more prescriptive than descriptive. It is useful to enquire into what sort of ideological work was performed by the assertion of 'difference' between masculine and feminine forms of spectatorship.

The idea of a relation between subjects which is based on identification rather than alienation is one that has been developed most attentively by feminist theory as a description of a 'feminine' relation. As such, it is not theorised strictly as 'female,' but as 'feminine': that is, an additional mode of behaviour or imagination shared by both sexes, but relegated within patriarchy to a subordinate position.³⁷ The historical presence of a subordinated, 'feminine' look is consistent with nineteenth-century assertions that women and other undereducated people were 'unable' to perform the feats of abstraction that were necessary for advanced art appreciation: a 'feminine' kind of looking such as I have described worked at such cross-purposes to the intended function of the National Portrait Gallery that it would be open to a similar devaluation, and hence consistent with the general culture of gender and art of the period. Theoretically, an imaginative relationship with the portraits which might be characterised as 'feminine' does not establish it as one that is more commonly or more powerfully experienced by women. If some of the circumstances of women's lives and use of galleries in the nineteenth century suggest that women would have been much more likely than men to make use of the Portrait Gallery in this way, the assertion of that division can also be seen to have served an important function in managing authority within the Portrait Gallery.

³⁶Discussions of working class visitors in picture exhibitions based on reports of their behaviour can be found in many documents and essays; see for example Frances Borzello, 'Pictures for the People', Ira Bruce Nadel and F.S. Schwarzbach, eds., *Victorian Artists and the City: A Collection of Critical Essays*, (New York and Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980): 30-40; or Seth Koven, 'The Whitechapel Picture Exhibitions and the Politics of Seeing', Sherman and Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994): 23-47.

³⁷This model of the structuring of gender is a commonplace of post-structuralist feminism, most cogently mapped for historians by Joan Scott in *Gender and the Politics of History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). Facing Femininities: Chapter six

In short, 'feminine' forms of looking can be understood as rhetorical devices for structuring hierarchies of spectatorship. I want to consider the politics and construction of women's looking at (National Portrait Gallery) portraits through the work of painter J.C. Horsley in his 1877 Royal Academy exhibit, *Critics on Costume*. Horsley was one of the more conservative members of the Royal Academy during one of its more conservative periods. During the late 1880s, Horsley engaged in a campaign against the study of the undraped nude, and particularly the study of the undraped nude by female students.³⁸ His insistence on the likelihood of women being corrupted by the study of the undraped model betrays a profoundly, though not unusually, gendered conception of spectatorship and the different abilities of men and women to apprehend and learn from the world around them. His conservative, paternalistic attitudes about gender and sexuality found a slightly less vehement expression in his painting *Critics on Costume*, which renders women's 'looking' as uninformed and, presumably, in need of male guidance.

Critics on Costume (figure 39) shows two women in Georgian day dress in the rooms of a man who is probably a picture dealer. The pictures that he deals in, or restores (the bowl of water and varnish are the tools of what were then controversial restoration practices - to reveal or not to reveal?) or perhaps even forges, are portraits. The portraits that the women are discussing are of Elizabeth I and Bess of Hardwick; in the room behind, from where the 'dealer' surreptitiously observes the women's conversation, a portrait of the despicable seductress Anna Maria Duchess of Shrewsbury sits on an easel. All of the women depicted in the portraits were women who had been given, one way or another, a poor character by nineteenth century historiography. The gestures of the women in conversation suggest, however, that they are not engaged in sombre discussion of the moral subjects of the paintings: they rather appear to be discussing the clothing worn by the women in the portraits. The precise import of the scene depicted is unclear, but the themes of the picture are certain: female immorality and the timeless arts of vanity used to

³⁸See Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality and Art*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996): 227-29.
Facing Femininities: Chapter six



Figure 39. J.C. Horsley, *Critics On Costume*
Exhibited R.A. 1877, unlocated, reproduced courtesy of Sotheby's
Facing Femininities: Chapter six

conceal, or at least aestheticise, them.³⁹ The theme of costume referred to in the title is one that joins all the women - 'living' and portrayed - in the act of duplicitous 'looking' (active and passive) which characterises their 'femininity.'

Horsley's construction of the women's 'connoisseurship' focuses concerns about costume, masquerade, and portraiture on women in a way which seems intended to read as a dismissal of women's ability to look seriously and productively at portraits. *Critics*, and other nineteenth century constructions of women's use of galleries as a site of social exchange and performance (such as those described in the previous section) conspire to make women's 'looks' appear frivolous and vain. While this construction of women's looking can be read, as above, as symptomatic of a 'feminine' way of engaging with portraiture, it can also be read as symptomatic of an attempt to feminise, and hence subordinate, certain problematic aspects of normative nineteenth-century portrait spectatorship.

There was one very significant problem in the normative way of looking at portraits in terms of the ambitions of the National Portrait Gallery. This problem was contained in the concept of authenticity which both underpinned, and conspired to undermine, the project of the National Portrait Gallery. Lurking behind the assertions of the encounter with the individual through their portrait (as described in section I above) was the threat that a portrait might not offer that authentic encounter. That threat existed in several ways. One was the possibility that the Trustees might be duped into accepting a wrongly identified portrait: a number of nineteenth century acquisitions were wrongly identified, and when errors were discovered they were discovered with disappointment and chagrin. Another was the possibility that a portrait might be a 'bad' portrait, that it might not give an appropriate or authentic insight into the character of the sitter: the rejected portrait of the Duchess of Portsmouth which did not represent her 'meretricious look' was one such bad portrait.⁴⁰ These problems figure the threat of what we now call modernism: the possibility that a portrait could *not* stand in for a person, that the painting could represent nothing but itself.

³⁹Thanks to Paul Barlow for sharing his letters to Nicola Watson about this painting, to which much of this interpretation is owed.

⁴⁰See Chapter four, section II.

Each of these uncertainties posed a threat to the nature of the Portrait Gallery as an authoritative representation of historical persons.

All of these threats to the authentic encounter through the portrait could be consigned to problems of looking, rather than problems of portraiture.⁴¹ The look which was inattentive to detail; which failed to correlate elements of the portrait with elements of the character; the look which failed even to interest itself in the sitter behind the representation would undermine the authentic encounter. If these problematic aspects of looking at portraiture could be relegated to the nature of the spectator, rather than the nature of the portrait, then the original ambitions of the Portrait Gallery to represent sitters was secured. The Portrait Gallery's early acquisitions of women's portraits, which emphasised the periods of 'superficial' female portraiture, suggest that the superficial 'look' was explicitly feminised. If by the end of the nineteenth century this modernity was appropriated to the masculine, in the middle of the nineteenth century, when authenticity and mimesis still reigned as the supreme values of representation, the threat of the 'modern' was rendered feminine.⁴²

All of the portraits depicted in *Critics on Costume* were part of the National Portrait Gallery's collection when Horsley's painting was exhibited in 1877, and it was no accident that Horsley could use that collection to make a painting about women, vanity and superficiality. He drew on what were the most obviously aestheticized portraits in the collection: *Critics* refers both to Elizabethan portraits, which had some of the most intensely detailed and ornamented surfaces of all the pictures of the collection; and to a Lely Restoration beauty, one of many collected by the National Portrait Gallery in the first decade or so of its existence. Often barely distinguishable from one another,

⁴¹In 'Pre-Raphaelitism and Post-Raphaelitism: the articulation of fantasy and the problem of pictorial space', Marcia Pointon ed., *The Pre-Raphaelites Reviewed*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989): 66-82, Paul Barlow investigates a similar problem - the contest between competing notions of pictorial space and access through representation- in the context of contemporary painting.

⁴²See Andreas Huyssen, 'Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other', *After the Great Divide*, (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1986): 44-64; and Lisa Tickner, 'Men's Work?: Masculinity and Modernism', in Norman Bryson et al. eds., *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*, (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994): 42-82.

Lely's portraits of court beauties literally embodied the themes of aestheticisation, superficiality, and femininity, particularly as several of them had what were considered to be rather thin claims to the status of historical significance. The work of the superficial, inattentive gaze could also be rendered as a superficial aestheticized look, feminised and marginalised through the acquisition of large numbers of portraits of beauties.

The irony of this feminisation of the superficial, inattentive gaze is that its purported activities are in some respects indistinguishable from those of the expert, educated gaze which guaranteed the authenticity of portraits, and the authentic encounter with the sitter. Trawling through history seeking the acquaintance of its significant characters differs very little from trawling through the Royal Academy annual show seeking the acquaintance of the most luminous figures present. The processes of portrait authentication often resembled the stylish musings of the ladies in *Critics*: attention to the detail of clothing and jewelry in portraiture was, and remains, one of the major tools in portrait identification and authentication.⁴³ The 'superficial' and the 'expert' gaze did not fundamentally differ, but were arrayed on a scale which was demarcated by the apparent seriousness with which the gaze was directed. One of the hallmarks of gender is that it is often deployed to establish variations in status when it would otherwise be difficult to do so: distinguishing between a masculine and feminine 'look' at portraiture seems a classic case of the mobilisation of gender for ideological, rather than descriptive purposes.

The suspicion that the spectator's gaze was gendered in order to affirm the status of the male viewer's (and more specifically, the male Trustees) authority in interpreting and authenticating portraiture is confirmed by the subsequent changes to the gendered attributions of that look. While an explicit and exclusively aesthetic assessment of a portrait was absolutely forbidden within the institutional discourse of the National Portrait Gallery under the first chairmanship of Earl Stanhope, subsequent chairs were more inclined towards, and indeed actively encouraged that kind of

⁴³See Chapter two, section IV.
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connoisseurship.⁴⁴ That greater freedom to appropriate feminised modes of portrait appreciation was, I would argue, a consequence of the Trustees securing their authority to appraise portraits through other discourses, specifically those of expertise or professionalism. As other systems of hierarchy were developed to distinguish between spectators, gender faded in importance as a structuring principle of visitors' appreciation of the Gallery.

The pursuits of the Trustees outside the Gallery supported their claim to engage in a professionally different kind of appraisal of the portraits. As noted in Chapter two, section V above, by the end of the century the most active Trustees were those who devoted their time to the practice or promotion of art. The increasing association of aesthetic production with professional production in contemporary art practice, and the increasing appraisal of portraits for their formal qualities, meant that the superficial, fashionable gaze was part of professional, masculine connoisseurship.⁴⁵ The Trustees could take paternalistic authority too from their social and economic positions: Hardinge wrote once to Scharf that 'I don't see why we are to buy such pictures merely because the *vulgar public* like them - our aim should be rather to draw them away from their contemplation and instruct them to like better things.'⁴⁶ The expert gaze continued to be gendered male, but did not rely exclusively on gender to identify its qualities: rather, it could be identified through the spectator's (masculine) professional status.

One way in which the exclusivity of a professional gaze was secured in the National Portrait Gallery was through physical space, both as it enforced certain kinds of spectatorship and in the ways it

⁴⁴See Chapters one and two for discussions of the history of the relations between connoisseurship and historical appreciation in the presentation of the Portrait Gallery.

⁴⁵This includes the practice of artists who held appointments on the Board of Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery during the later nineteenth century, particularly Frederic Leighton, Edward Poynter, and G.F. Watts who are generally included in groupings of nineteenth century neo-classicists. See for instance Christopher Wood, *Olympian Dreamers*, (London: Constable, 1983). Millais' association with early Pre-Raphaelitism, and Coutts-Lindsay's patronage of later Pre-Raphaelitism, are also well-documented. See Chapter four, section III.

⁴⁶Hardinge in a letter to Scharf, 3 April 1879, Trustees' correspondence, NPG, London; he is referring to some unspecified paintings by Ward. My italics.

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marked out the differences between professionals and visitors.⁴⁷ At the first National Portrait Gallery in Great George Street, the physical space did not help to differentiate between different kinds of spectatorship. The portraits, being jumbled together on the walls wherever there was space for them, did not invite any kind of regimented viewing, nor did the organisation of the Gallery differentiate between its uses: the same rooms were used for public exhibition and the specialist pursuits of the Secretary, the Trustees and their friends. The Portrait Gallery's 1868 move to larger, purpose-built galleries in South Kensington had several important effects on the ways that spectatorship in the Gallery was managed. At South Kensington, the potential for the consuming or aestheticising gaze in the National Portrait Gallery was dampened by the disciplining of the viewer, who was directed by the gallery to take a serious, concentrated, and historical view of the portraits. Simultaneously, a special space was assigned to the officials of the museum for the pursuit of their professional duties: spaces within the gallery were similarly portioned between professionals and visitors in each of its subsequent locations. The appropriation of space within the gallery for specialised study helped to identify and authorise an expert gaze - even an expert aesthetic gaze - which was different from that of (inexpert) women.

The attempt to attribute different qualities of spectatorship with different kinds of persons was never unproblematic. The precariousness of these kinds of attributions are revealed in a contemporary cartoon from *Punch*, which appeared six months after the Bethnal Green Museum opened with an exhibition of what is now founded as the Wallace Collection.⁴⁸ Titled 'Bethnal Green,' it shows visitors at the museum admiring the pictures (figure 40). The caption, which is spoken by 'East-ENDER,' suggests that while the visitors are paying close attention to what they see, their observations are not contributing to an increased or broader knowledge: 'Ary Scheffer! Hignorant fellers, these foreigners, Bill! Spells 'Enery without the Haitch!' The joke is in the mistaking of the correctly spelled Ary for a misspelled Harry, but also in the contrast

⁴⁷See Carol McKay, 'Museums, curators and the mere "snapper up of unconsidered trifles:" some nineteenth-century debates'; a fuller discussion of the physical gallery is in Chapter one of this thesis.

⁴⁸*Punch*, 7 December 1872, V. 63: 233.

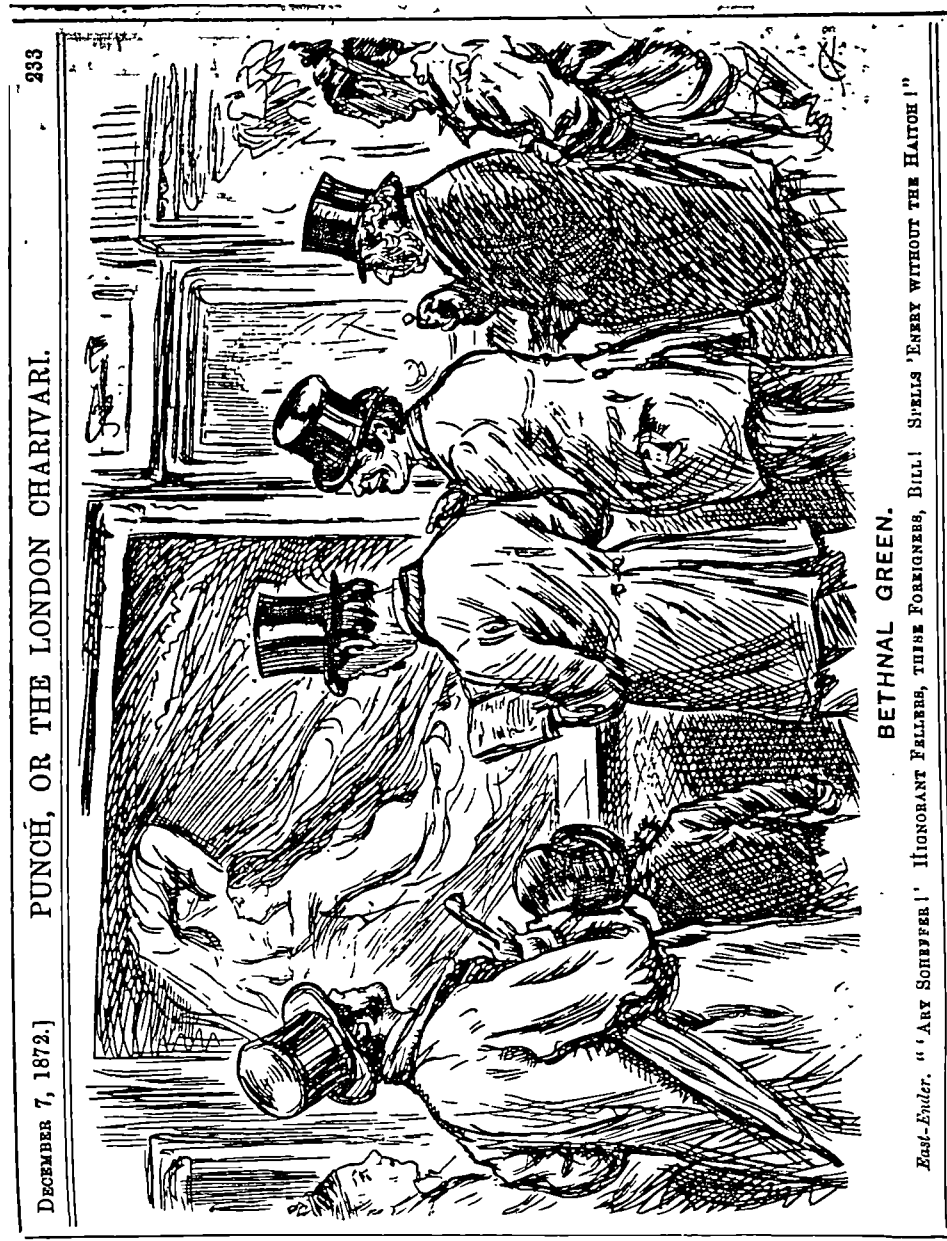


Figure 40. 'C.K.', *Bethnal Green*, from *Punch*, 7 December 1872

between image and text: although the text represents the speaker with an East End working class accent, the image doesn't use visual stereotypes of the East End to depict the commentator. Except that his coat is slightly disheveled, he appears in the cartoon as any respectable gent, in morning coat, top hat and striped trousers. While the text confirms that the uneducated have nothing to gain from gallery-going, the image questions what a 'real' respectable gent might be thinking as he stands before the 'Ary'. This image plays on an anxiety about whether even the sophisticated minds of the educated were capable of appreciating fine works of art.

The class conventions of fine art spectatorship that this cartoon constructs (and deconstructs) clearly informed the official feelings about the Portrait Gallery's exhibition at Bethnal Green during the 1880s and 1890s.⁴⁹ In the same way that spectatorship was notionally divided by class, a convention of feminine spectatorship was constructed in texts as diverse as Horsley's academy oil and the novels of romantic intrigue and stern works of museum theory referred to above. While these images probably had a certain degree of descriptive power in them, that degree of descriptive power was not anchored and fixed in the hierarchies which it was used to inscribe; rather it helped to fix the hierarchy that privileged the male, particularly the expert male, gaze. The supposed fixity of that hierarchy was always liable to be cast into doubt or confusion by the internal contradictions that were produced in its construction. As suggested by the *Punch* cartoon, the hierarchical attribution of degrees of sophistication in spectatorship could itself be matter of 'dressing up', a costume to be removed or put on as one would a morning coat.

The 'feminine look' described in section II above could 'undress' the narrative qualities of the National Portrait Gallery by using an alternative mechanism for understanding the portraits: to identify with, rather than confront, the subjects represented by the portraits was to undermine the apparent intentions of the Gallery. Understood as a rhetorical device, however, the misunderstanding represented by a 'feminine look' did not undermine or disturb the object of the

⁴⁹See Chapter one, section III. The South Kensington Museum and Portrait Gallery officials were inclined by this time to treat portraiture as a fine art, and were clear that the populace of Bethnal Green were incapable of properly understanding the collection.

Gallery, at least insofar as it functioned as an 'other' which authorised male activity and expertise. Within the gendered conventions of nineteenth century spectatorship, no woman could be an adequate spectator; and yet to draw the conclusion that women and the feminine were dismissed from the interests of the Portrait Gallery flies in the face of the evidence of women's sanctioned presence there, both as sitters and as spectators. To ask, and to begin to try and answer, the question 'what about women spectators?' can at least expose the fragility of the nineteenth-century Portrait Gallery's gendered rhetoric.

IV. Looking back: portraits of women artists

One small but critical aspect of the Portrait Gallery's collection of women's portraits yet to be considered: portraits of women artists. Three were collected by the National Portrait Gallery in the nineteenth century: self-portraits by a founder member of the Royal Academy, Angelica Kaufmann (NPG 430, figure 41), and by painter and draughtswoman Ann Mary Newton (NPG 977, figure 42); and a portrait of sculptor Anne Seymour Damer (NPG 594, figure 43) by Joshua Reynolds. In the context of the nineteenth-century Portrait Gallery, these portraits produced a distinctive image for the women they represented. While seeming to invoke the same kinds of feminine stereotypes through the same kinds of signifiers as appear in the rest of the collection of women's portraits, the effect of those significations in the portraits of women artists is inconsistent with those of the others in the collection. In one sense these portraits and their connotations are eminently feminine; but because the sitters were artists, their portraits were made exceptions to the rules of historicity and 'beauty' which were enforced in the rest of the collection. Their national accomplishment was one which, among the administrators of the Portrait Gallery, was roughly gendered masculine, and therefore exempted from the narrative of feminine development. The narrative work of portraits of women artists within the collection was ambivalent, and constituted a fragile aspect in the logic of sexual difference which structured the presence of women in the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery.

The complexity of the status of portraits of women artists in the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery is a consequence of the

way that their portraits straddled two opposed curatorial categories: that of the author, and that of the beauty. Aesthetically, these portraits most resemble the portraits of beauties, seeming to belong to a genre which connoted an archaic sexual extravagance. Those pictorial connotations were, however, contested by anecdotal associations which associated women artists with the kind of polite accomplishment celebrated in the collection of women authors. Women's artistic practice, particularly the practice of the subjects represented here, was frequently constructed as an accomplishment similar in moral value to that of 'lady' authors. The femininity of women artists was just as susceptible to appropriation into the tradition of the 'lady' as the authors, and was done so in comparable ways. Women's art practice, though sometimes regarded as intrusive and transgressive, could also be construed as an indicator of leisure and privilege used honourably and in an appropriately feminine fashion.

This appropriation is exemplified in the biographising of an artist who was a lady, the Honourable Anne Seymour Damer. 'Horace Walpole's Advertisement', prefixed to the fourth volume of his *Anecdotes of Painting* (1762; 4th volume 1780), is a paean to the English arts 'emerging from the wretched state in which they lay at the accession of George I'. He includes a number of women in his survey of the contemporary arts, lavishing extravagant praise on his cousin and legatee Anne Damer: 'Mrs. Damer's busts from the life are not inferior to the antique, and theirs we are sure were not more like.'⁵⁰ Walpole's praise of Damer and others is reminiscent of George Ballard's celebration of feminine literary accomplishment as an index of national civility, a point with which Mrs. Damer's early twentieth-century biographer would have agreed: he attributed Walpole's attachment to Mrs. Damer to his gratification that 'a woman of rank and beauty, possessing the usual accomplishments of a woman of quality, should have gained proficiency in art which...posterity would contemplate with feelings of admiration and esteem.'⁵¹ This was

⁵⁰Horace Walpole, *Anecdotes of Painting in England*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1876), V. I: xv-xxiii.

⁵¹Percy Noble, *Anne Seymour Damer: A Woman of Art and Fashion*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1908): 75. Discussions of women and the national reputation can be found in the Introduction and in Chapter two, section III of this thesis.



Figure 41. Self-portrait, *Angelica Kauffman* (1741-1807)
Canvas, ca. 1770-75, 73.7 x 61, NPG 430



Figure 42. Self-portrait, *Ann Mary Newton* (1832-66)
Canvas, exh. R.A. 1863, 61 x 52.1, NPG 977

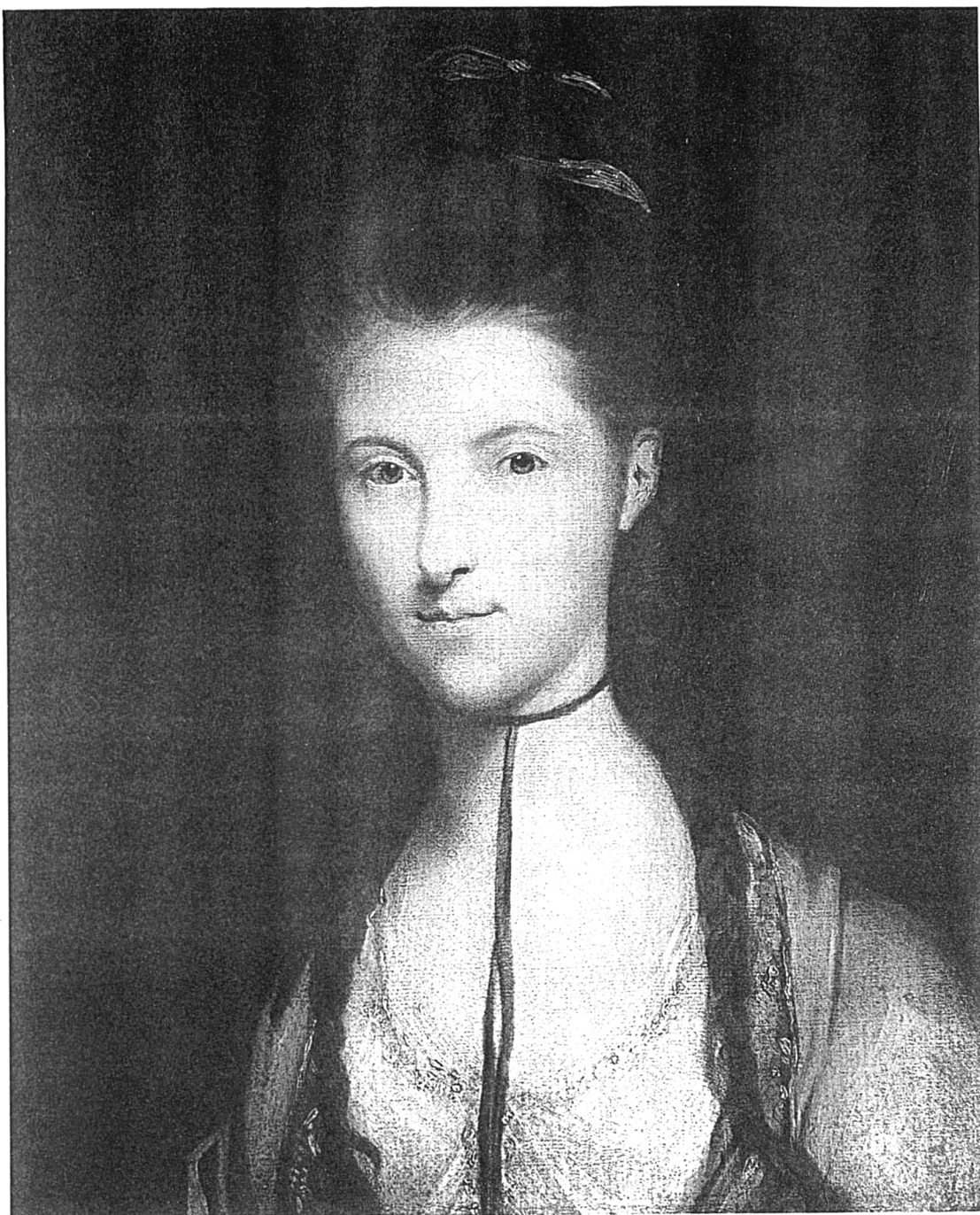


Figure 43. Studio of Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Anne Seymour Damer*
(1749-1828)
Canvas, 1772, 54 x 44.5, NPG 594

evidently also the feeling when Mrs. E.F. Ellett, author of *Women Artists in All Ages and Countries* (1859), asserted of Mrs. Damer that 'it is a rarer honour to a nation to be able to boast of a successful artist of aristocratic origin than of a celebrated statesman.'⁵²

Like lady authors, the praise for lady painters was framed in terms of their exhibition of the feminine virtues of social graces and domestic dedication as well as their exhibitions of art. This is true of early nineteenth century mixed-sex biographical collections such as John Gould's *A Dictionary of Painters, Sculptors, Architects and Engravers* (1810) which praises Mrs. Beale for being 'amiable in her manners, assiduous in her profession, and [for having] a poetical mind',⁵³ and Allan Cunningham's notice of Maria Cosway in *The Lives of the Eminent British Painters* (1829), whose artistic success he acknowledges was sacrificed to 'domestic happiness'.⁵⁴ Ann Mary Newton, daughter of painter Joseph Severn, was married to archaeologist Charles Newton and accompanied him on travels, making illustrations for his lectures and publications. It was for this 'wifely devotion' that she was chiefly remembered by contemporaries as an artist.⁵⁵ Mrs. Newton, Mrs. Cosway and Mrs. Beale were all respectably married into the profession of painting: interestingly, Cunningham's only indexed mentions of the less respectably married Angelica Kauffman and Anne Damer were as visitors of Mrs. Cosway; Gould fails to mention either of them.

Mrs. Ellett's 1859 volume, and Ellen C. Clayton's *English Female Artists* (1876) are, like many of the mid-nineteenth century books on authors, attempts to validate women's artistic practice in terms of its coherence with contemporary norms of feminine behaviour. Ellen Clayton opens her volume with the assertion that 'artists, especially English artists, and above all, English Female Artists, as a rule lead quiet, uneventful lives, far more so than authors. In the majority of instances, their daily existence flows tranquilly on within the

⁵²Mrs. E.F. Ellett, *Women Artists in All Ages and Countries*, (London: Richard Bentley, 1859): 146.

⁵³John Gould, *A Dictionary of Painters, Sculptors, Architects and Engravers*, (London: Gale and Curtis, 1810): 51.

⁵⁴Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Eminent British Painters*, annotated by Mrs. Charles Heaton, (London: George Bell and Sons, 1879), V. 2: 349/50.

⁵⁵Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993): 38-40.

precincts of the studio...they affect little display; they leave surprisingly few *bonmots* or personal anecdoteana for the benefit of future biographers.⁵⁶ This passage works to ally the work of women artists with the acceptable work of women authors through an emphasis on its nature as cloistered work, and to attack the notion (the source of controversy in the 1870s) that artistic practice involved women in transgressive or potentially dangerous forms of social engagement.⁵⁷ She particularly mentions the affectation of display: the exposure of women artists to their sitters was one of the problematic areas of women's art practice, and it is also the key themes of the portraits of women artists collected by the National Portrait Gallery.

It is in their imaging of display that the portraits of women artists leave the genteel circle of lady authors and enter into a more exotic association with beauties. While the portraits of women artists are by no means as saturated with signifiers of eroticised feminine display as are, for example, Lely's court 'beauties', they certainly have much in common with them formally.⁵⁸ All are half-length portraits, and all in oil, giving them a status as objects at variance with at least the most contemporary portraits of authors, which the Portrait Gallery usually represented in bust-length drawings.⁵⁹ All have the soft expressions, and two at least have the big sultry eyes, common to portraits of 'beauties'. Together with the portraits of the Duchess of Devonshire and Emma Hamilton discussed in Chapter four, the portraits of Anne Damer and Angelica Kauffmann are the only representatives of what was at the time the much vaunted late

⁵⁶Ellen C. Clayton, *English Female Artists*, (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1876), V. 1: 1.

⁵⁷Angela Rosenthal, 'She's got the look! Eighteenth-century female portrait painters and the psychology of a potentially "dangerous employment,"' in Joanna Woodall, ed., *Portraiture: Facing the subject*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997): 147-166; see also Jan Marsh, 'Art, ambition and sisterhood in the 1850s' in Orr, ed., *Women in the Victorian Art World*,: 33-48.

⁵⁸Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock discuss the 'beautiful' (self) representation of women artists in *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981): 92-97, a strategy of portraiture which they read as disruptive to their images as artists. While I agree that explicit feminisation can in some contexts interfere with the construction of female artistic identity, I am here interested in how that conjunction might also complicate or disturb the masculine identity of artists.

⁵⁹See Chapter five, section III

eighteenth-century 'beautiful' school of female portraiture.⁶⁰ All are elegant, feminine portraits of a very fine quality by any standard, and certainly by the standards of the late nineteenth-century Portrait Gallery.⁶¹

Bearing signs both of the beauty and of the author, the portraits of women artists in the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery confuse its account of femininity. The uncertain status of the artists in the narrative of feminine development is reinforced by the women artists' positions in the literal chronology of the collection. Ann Mary Newton had died a young woman in 1866, but was a contemporary (and in some senses a colleague) of some of the older Gallery officials; connected to the present by living memory, she was a figure of relative modernity in the Portrait Gallery. On the other hand, Kauffmann and Damer were both active in the later eighteenth century, a period which was definitely in the past (especially with respect to women) so far as the Portrait Gallery's history was concerned. Neither wholly present nor wholly past, and linked with neither by their content, we cannot locate the women artists in the narrative which structured the Portrait Gallery's account of the history and development of English womanhood.

The only way to understand these portraits within the narrative of the Portrait Gallery's collection is to posit the 'beauty' of the women artists as a venerable, rather than outmoded, expression of their femininity. If we construe the 'beautiful' qualities of their portraits as appropriate signifiers of their skill as artists, rather than signifiers of their sexual allure, then their presence in the collection makes more sense, particularly since it was being managed during the period of their acquisition by artists. Reading the 'beauty' of the portraits as a signifier of artistic skill is also consistent with their more demure display: while Kauffmann wears the non-specific loose and low-necked dress of the beauty, she is holding it against her bosom with her free hand in a gesture of authorish modesty. The explicit reference to sexual modesty (and immodesty) in Kauffman's portrait was perhaps authorised by its consistency with the anecdotal

⁶⁰Margaret Maynard, "A Dream of Fair Women": Revival Dress and the Formation of Late Victorian Images of Femininity', *Art History* September 1989, 12(3): 322-41. See also the conclusion of Chapter four.

⁶¹Ann Mary Newton's self-portrait was singled out for special mention in the *Art Journal's* review of the 1863 Royal Academy Exhibition, N.S. V. 2, 110. Facing Femininities: Chapter six

interest of her sometimes scandalised romantic life; neither Mrs. Newton nor Mrs. Damer suggest a literally sexualised beauty. The 'beauty' of the artist portraits is of a different order than that of the characteristic Restoration court portraits of beauties.

The resemblance between the women artists and the women authors takes precedence when the 'beauty' of their portraits is read, like an author's cap, as a token of their accomplishment. Interpreting the beauty of the portraits as evidence of skill is consistent with the traits of what were importantly the *self*-portraits of Ann Mary Newton and Angelica Kauffman, which include more literal references to their work as artists. Angelica Kauffmann holds a paintbrush in one hand which is also balancing what seems to be a canvas on her lap; Ann Mary Newton depicted herself holding a folio of drawings, probably a reference to her work as an archaeological draughtswoman. In common with the portraits of many of the authors, their work is signified in their self-portraiture, a mechanism read by Gill Perry in the self-portraiture of eighteenth-century women painters as a strategy to assert professional status.⁶² Like the authors, these two artists were presented by the Portrait Gallery as women of accomplishment.

We thus might take the portraits of women artists to be, in the context of the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery, representations comparable in meaning and function to the portraits of authors. Damer's portrait (purchased 1879), Ann Mary Newton's portrait (a gift of 1895) and Angelica Kauffmann's portrait (purchased 1876) were all acquired after Viscount Hardinge had taken the Chair of the Trustees - in other words, after formal accomplishment had become one of the Portrait Gallery's informal criteria for acquisition.⁶³ It is tempting to interpret these acquisitions as an affirmation of women's capacity for artistic competence, an interpretation which could be supported by noting the increasing numbers of women students admitted to the Gallery during the last decade of the nineteenth century.⁶⁴ Yet, the

⁶²Gill Perry, "The British Sappho": Borrowed Identities and Women Artists in late Eighteenth-Century British Art', *Oxford Art Journal*, 1995 18(1): 45-57.

⁶³See Chapter two, section V.

⁶⁴A handwritten list of student's tickets issued 1871-77 shows that three of the eighteen (fifteen percent) were issued to women; the *Register of Students' Names and Adresses* kept from 1896 shows that between 1896 and 1901 around half the students were women: NPG, London.

recognition of the 'aesthetic' in the Portrait Gallery seems rather to have been linked with a process of valorising masculine artistic production through producing women as the object, rather than the subject, of any act of aestheticisation.⁶⁵ Recognising women as producers of aesthetic objects - as the painters of 'beauties' - is inconsistent with the Portrait Gallery's arrangement of sexual attributes for visitors and administrators. The connotations of the portraits of women artists can be squared with the representation of sexual difference in the Portrait Gallery's collection, but only to become dislocated in the structures of the sexual difference which shaped the culture of fine art production and appreciation in which the nineteenth-century Portrait Gallery participated.

Reading artistic endeavour as an exemplary feminine activity cannot be squared with the way that gender was used to organise a hierarchy of visual competence in the Portrait Gallery in the later-nineteenth century. In its gendered economy of spectatorship, women were the subjects, rather than the agents, of aestheticisation, and the portraits of women would have been read as 'beauties', as objects for connoisseurial consumption. That the portraits of Kauffman, Damer and Newton were understood or intended to be read as beautiful objects rather than evidence of female accomplishment is suggested by the exclusion of two other portraits from the collection: a portrait of Angelica Kauffman rejected, for unknown reasons, in 1863,⁶⁶ and a portrait of Margaret Carpenter (figure 44), offered and declined in 1899. Although Margaret Carpenter had enjoyed a spectacularly thriving career as a portrait painter and, at the time her portrait was offered, was the author of no less than four paintings in the Portrait Gallery's collection, her portrait was 'declined, since the Board could not agree that Mrs.

⁶⁵This matter is discussed throughout the thesis: see section III above and its references.

⁶⁶The portrait of Angelica Kauffman was sketched by Scharf, see *National Portrait Gallery: The Notebooks of Sir George Scharf (1820-95)*. (microfilm reprint London: World Microfilms Publications, 1978) TSB V. 7: 63. It was declined by the Trustees at their meeting 6 February 1863. In 1858, another portrait of Kaufmann, also rejected, was offered by the dealer Graves. In a letter to the Trustees dated 9 February 1859 Graves argued that 'I presume this distinguished Royal Academician may be considered English', which suggests that her portrait was declined at that time on the grounds of foreign birth; Trustees correspondence, NPG, London. The 1863 portrait may have been rejected for this, or another reason; other possibilities are suggested below.



Figure 44. William Carpenter, *Margaret Carpenter* (1793 - 1872)
Exhibited R.A. 1846, unlocated, photograph courtesy NPG

Carpenter's position in the history of art entitled her to a place in the collection.'⁶⁷ It is hard to see why, relative in particular to Ann Mary Newton, Margaret Carpenter's portrait was refused.

Or rather, it is hard to understand, but perhaps easier to see. Both the rejected portraits described above were offered and considered as self-portraits.⁶⁸ Where the self-portraits of Kauffman and Newton that were accepted by the Trustees were half-lengths showing the artists holding their tools, the two rejected self-portraits were more explicit in their representation of the creative act. Both of the rejected portraits are larger, three-quarter length portraits; the Kauffman portrait shows her holding a palette and seated before a canvas, looking out as if sizing up the viewer as a subject; the portrait of Carpenter shows her in the same relation to the viewer, but actually working a canvas. Carpenter is intent in her work, and may at any moment turn the problematic gaze of the female artist (the same one actually being directed by the rejected Kauffman) onto the viewer. Obviously engaged in their 'dangerous employment', the labour of the artist is directly and unselfconsciously imaged in a way that seems to have been unacceptable in women's portraits in the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery.⁶⁹

⁶⁷Minutes of Trustees meeting 16 November 1899, NPG, London. Margaret Carpenter exhibited at the Royal Academy nearly every year between 1818 and 1866. She was married to William Carpenter, one of the founding Trustees of the Portrait Gallery. Short accounts of her life can be found in the *Dictionary of Women Artists* (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), V. 1: 348-50 and the *Dictionary of National Biography*; her obituary in the *Art Journal*, January 1873, NS. V. 7: 6 gives the information that her portrait of John Gibson was in the National Gallery, and offers the suggestion that she merited a place in the Royal Academy.

⁶⁸The portrait of Margaret Carpenter was later identified as one made by her painter son, William Carpenter. The portrait of Angelica Kauffman was offered as a self-portrait, and the only notes about attribution made by Scharf (in the TSB entry cited in fn. 66 above) were 'somewhat like the style of Pompeo Batoni'. The sketch does not resemble any portrait now recognised as one of Angelica Kauffman.

⁶⁹See Rosenthal, 'She's Got the Look'; this issue is also discussed with respect to authors in Chapter 5, section II above. Displaying the labour of the female artist in the nineteenth century may have sounded a note of conscious resistance: Emily Osborne's very large, full length oil portrait of Barbara Bodichon, a formidable feminist, painter, and financial supporter of Girton College, Cambridge (where the portrait is hung) shows her as in the act of making a painting, with her gaze fixed intently on the canvas. This painting is reproduced as Plate 13 and discussed on pages 104-09 of Deborah Cherry's *Painting Women*.

The rejected portraits suggest that the Trustees were conscious of the way that self-portraits of labouring women artists might have challenged the structures of sexual difference that the Portrait Gallery's collection constructed and defended. A woman looking could not be a woman looked at, and an active artist could not be a 'beauty', even an accomplished one. But how can one read the portraits of artists that *were* collected if they must be portraits of beauties, not artists; and if they must be artists as well as beauties? These portraits belong neither to the past of the 'beauty' nor the present of the author, they represent neither the passive nor the active subject. The portraits of Kauffman, Newton, and Damer tread a thin line between the beauty and the woman of accomplishment, show the fragility of the borders between looker and looked-at. They reveal the sitter as the painter, the beauty as the artist, and the implied spectator as the subject.⁷⁰ The structures of sexual difference established in the collection of the Portrait Gallery depended on and sustained a whole set of distinctions which were challenged by these portraits: the distinctions made between past and present, producer/consumer, subject/object, and superficial/authentic. These important divisions were challenged by three paintings whose representation of national accomplishment in the arts placed them at the heart of the nineteenth-century collection.

V. *Epilogue: seeing not believing*

The artistic careers of Angelica Kauffman, Ann Mary Newton, and Anne Seymour Damer had been both ambitious and fruitful, and each sitter's biography demonstrated a resourcefulness and accomplishment which commanded the respect and admiration of the Trustees. The portraits chosen to represent them reflected their achievements and testified to their ability; they also suggested the high standards of painterly skill and appreciation of beauty that were achieved in England during the lives of each of these women. There was much to recommend these portraits, and the sitters they represented, to the National Portrait Gallery, in its capacity either a collector of eminent sitters, or as a gallery of portraiture. That their portraits were in fact acquired is proof of the value attached to the

⁷⁰The play between these is considered by Marsha Meskimmon in *The Art of Reflection: Women's Artists' Self-Portraiture in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Scarlet Press, 1996): 1-7.

sitters and the paintings; but also exposes the fragility of the ideal feminine subject constructed by the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery's collection and presentation.

The portraits of these three women selected by the Portrait Gallery represented them in ways which were largely consistent with the representations of the other women, and the national feminine, in the collection. The character of the paintings and the qualities they appeared to represent are familiar reworkings of the themes that patterned the portraits of authors and of beauties. But the ways that those qualities were arranged, and the kinds of things which they signified also offered some challenges to the conventions of femininity which guided the Trustees in their acquisition of women's portraits throughout the first forty years of the Gallery's history. This is most especially true of the two self-portraits; it was in the process of seeing and transcribing themselves that women sitters departed from the conventions that their portraits were deputised by the National Portrait Gallery to uphold. As the active agents, rather than passive subjects, of beauty these portraits challenged the boundaries of the feminine which were effectively guarded in the rest of the collection.

The contradictory and difficult way that the portraits of women artists related to other portraits in the collection, particularly in their representation of the process of consumption and production, relates to the tension that surfaces in the effort to identify the ways that women viewers produced and consumed the Portrait Gallery. Neither of the possible versions of 'feminine' spectatorship explored here produced a spectator who had full access to the narrative established in the Gallery. The feminine spectator who was the 'other' of the normative spectator described in 'Women's ways of looking: one', above, could not fully assimilate the feminine ideal promoted in the Gallery, hence her efforts to achieve that ideal would be crippled by lack of understanding; if she did understand and assimilate that ideal, she was transgressing her ascribed capacities as a spectator as identified in 'Women's ways of looking: two', and hence became by definition unfeminine (or perhaps unEnglish). The feminine spectator, by being placed outside the conditions of normative spectatorship, was not understood to be in a position to fully

interpret and express the ideals of femininity placed before her by the Gallery's collection.

When feminine subject became an active agent - either as sitter or viewer - she could not be easily fixed within the logic of sexual difference which was apparently observed by the (male) Trustees in their construction of the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery. When she entered as the maker of a portrait, it was possible that the image would exceed (or suggest excesses of) the boundaries of femininity, even if (like the portraits of women artists) it appeared to conform with the others in the collection. When the female subject entered as a visitor, the gendered conditions of her spectatorship seem to result in her disappearance into a cognitive void; although women spectators obviously existed, their active looking and apprehension of the collection precluded them from being the subject it rendered desirable. The feminine subject, apparently so elegantly and conclusively described in the Portrait Gallery's narrative of Englishness, could never be realised in an actual woman, or be fully apprehended through women's eyes.

CONCLUSION

In the *Sketch* of May 1896, the reviewer who visited the new National Portrait Gallery in St. Martin's Lane wrote, 'the New Woman should certainly find a new grievance in the National Portrait Gallery, for the sterner sex are in the overwhelming majority. Why there should be such a "beggarly array" of representative Englishwomen one is at a loss to discover.'¹ The New Woman was given further reasons for grievance in the restricted selection of portraits: the review went on to note that those few images were largely of queens, and authors who were 'banished from their masculine rivals'. This contemporary reviewer - probably a woman, perhaps a man educated by feminism - evaluated the Portrait Gallery's collection of women's portraits on feminist grounds, and offered a bluntly critical assessment it in the midst of the celebratory opening of the grand, new National Portrait Gallery.²

The New Woman, the *Sketch* reviewer suggested, would like to have seen a broader array of women in the Portrait Gallery, and was perhaps missing characters like Hannah Snell, Catherine Macaulay, Lydia Becker or Dorothy Jordan who were then still excluded from the collection. According to the review, the New Woman would also have liked to see the portraits of women placed in a different relation to their male peers (or in the *Sketch*'s words, rivals), placed in a relation which suggested comparability rather than difference. But if the New Woman found the range and arrangement of the women's portraits in the new National Portrait Gallery wanting, it seems fair to suppose that the body responsible for choosing the portraits, the Trustees of the Gallery, would have been dismissive of, and disappointed by, the *Sketch*'s review and its suggestion that their collection of women's portraits was 'beggarly'.

¹*Sketch*, 20 May 1896: np, clipping in *New Building 1889-96*, NPG, London. This is one of several clippings which have been referred to in reconstructing the 1896 hang which is not documented in the Portrait Gallery's muniments; it is described in more detail at the end of section III of Chapter five.

²*The Sketch*, a general interest illustrated journal subtitled 'A Journal of Art and Actuality' had been founded only in 1893; no women are identifiable on its list of contributors, but its inclusion of O. Wilde may signal a progressive viewpoint. From the *Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, 1800-1900*, (North Waterloo Academic Press, 1997): V. 6, Series 1.

The Trustees of the Portrait Gallery had made what they might have defended as determined efforts to acquire portraits of women: they petitioned for years for a portrait of Queen Victoria, and had made exceptions to the ten-years dead rule in order to expediently acquire portraits of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot and Agnes Strickland. The Gallery's early acquisition of a portrait of Elizabeth Hamilton, the first in a colourful array of female courtiers, had been criticised in the House of Commons as an abuse of its brief. Perhaps not all the one hundred and thirty-seven portraits of women which had been collected when the St. Martin's Place Gallery opened were exhibited, but the Trustees would surely have found the *Sketch's* criticism exaggerated if not erroneous. The Trustees' objects in collecting and hanging portraits of women in the National Portrait Gallery were not necessarily shared by the *New Woman*, but were consistent with their own sense of national history and institutional duty.

The extent to which women were invoked by the National Portrait Gallery's ambition to illustrate a coherent history of the political nation is a register of how profoundly gender was implicated with questions of state and nation. Earl Stanhope's description of the criteria for the selection of portraits for the collection was that it ought not to display 'a single portrait as to which a man [sic] of good education passing round and seeing the name in the catalogue would be under the necessity of asking, "who is he"[sic]'.³ Perhaps better than any passage of argument or data assembled in this thesis, the (incorrect) double masculine of Stanhope's statement makes explicit how central gender was to the enterprise of the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery, and articulates the role of women there: women would be included as the sitters for portraits which would define and clarify male history, and be the unnamed constituency for its exhibition. Gender was not incidental to, or a subset of, any of the concerns most obviously being addressed by the National Portrait Gallery: it was intrinsically part of its administrators' conception of the national, of history, and of the institution's own role in the community.

³*Hansard*, 3d series, V. 140, c. 1778.

The significance of gender to the Portrait Gallery's account of the political nation raises questions about how and why women were conceptually implicated in the institutions of state from which they were practically excluded. Although they were themselves an all male body, the Trustees' sense of national history and institutional duty prescribed the acquisition of a fair number of portraits of women - proportionally only marginally fewer than the portraits of women collected to date by the Portrait Gallery.⁴ Their diligence in this regard implies that women, and the feminine, were regarded by the Trustees as a legitimate and significant part of the nation. This thesis bears witness to the fashion in which they exercised this conviction, but raises almost as many questions as it answers about how they acquired and developed this sense of a gendered nation.

The contexts in which the Trustees' concepts of nation were formed and validated have here been only briefly sketched, and deserve further investigation. There are recognisable patterns of affiliation and interest which characterise the lives of the Trustees, patterns which cannot be represented simply by descriptions of class or political affiliation, although these clearly played a role in the constitution of the Board of Trustees. Bodies apparently peripheral to the construction of the modern 'nation' - organisations like the Society of Antiquaries, buildings like Westminster Abbey, or even the organisation of the trade in portraits - which were clearly influential in the construction of the Portrait Gallery's collection, deserve to have their contents and contributions to the modern institutions of state researched in a fuller way. The same can be said of the Trustees themselves: institutional courtesy has largely made their individual contributions anonymous, but their characters and opinions shaped the collection and history of the Portrait Gallery and other related institutions with which they were involved, and could be subjected to further investigation.

If, for instance, the history of English women constructed in the National Portrait Gallery can be construed as being in part a representation of the Trustees' *personal* sense of women in their

⁴In 1900, 7.5% of the individuals represented in the National Portrait Gallery (in both individual and group portraits) were women; in August 1998, women constituted 11.7% of the total number of individuals represented. This may be read both as reflecting well on the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery, and badly on the twentieth-century collection. Many thanks to Jill Springall and an unidentified computer expert for retrieving that data.

lives, it points in the direction of their families. Together with the dynastic patterns constructed in the collection of royal women, the images of 'beauties' and authors set up a narrative of development which emerged in the nineteenth century with a spate of authors whose images were selected for resistance to the eroticisation invited by the portraits of 'beauties'. The focus on women's sexuality in particular and social virtues in general in the nineteenth century takes on a more legible significance if the sense of the 'national' which engendered it was founded on the family lives of the men who were responsible for articulating the 'nation'. The nineteenth-century pre-occupation with women's sexual behaviour may have been born of a conception of women's role within the nation as equivalent to their roles as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters. These kinds of relationships with women were enjoyed by many of the Trustees, and may be one of the foundations upon which their presentation of women in the nation was staged.

A more detailed investigation of the opinions and knowledges of the Trustees may further illuminate the rationale behind their selections of portraits of men as well as women. The Trustees' choices of male portraits have been investigated only incidentally as need arose. Taken together, the research on men's and women's portraits reported here suggests that the collection was structured by gender in a way which defended the masculinity of the professional and 'public' lives in which the Trustees participated; this interaction seems particularly complex and interesting when the artists on the Board appeared to adopt or absorb into their professional identity the typically female characteristic of 'beauty', producing an interesting alteration in the way that female portraits were evaluated.⁵ A systematic assessment of both male and female portraits would offer a fuller and more demonstrable revelation of the ways that gender operated in the collection.

The juxtaposition in this research of administrators, sitters, and audience also suggests that questions of class in nineteenth-century museums and galleries needs to be handled with subtlety: no one of these groups falls easily into a unified class group. Two of the Portrait Gallery's categories of female historical significance were not

⁵This is discussed in greatest detail in Chapter four on 'beauties', but also in parts of Chapters two and six.

predicated on class status - beauties and authors - and both included women from various social ranks, as did the Board of Trustees. It might be argued that the articulation of a 'national' that appeared to transcend class was necessary to the enterprise of the National Portrait Gallery, where class distinctions that were too marked would have seriously detracted from, if not dissolved, the coherence and potency of its 'national' story as one which would unite the enfranchised. But how the National Portrait Gallery responded to and related to their audiences, as they were conceived of and as they appeared, suggests that it was far from an 'unclassed' institution. How the construction of this 'nation' intervened in the class politics of the nineteenth century requires careful consideration.⁶

Discovering the principles and intentions upon which the collections of national galleries and museums were formed is important to making decisions about their management today. The national (and other public) collections founded in the nineteenth century have acquired a certain authority to represent periods and styles in the history of art, just as the sitters assembled by the National Portrait Gallery acquired an authority to represent the nation. Their status is secured by virtue (if nothing else) of their being more freely and fully studied than objects in private collections or small museums. That the process of endowing particular objects, and particular persons, with such significance was materially situated in an ideological context is one now widely recognised by historians, but the functions of women and gender within that context do not seem to be as fully understood or recognised as they should be.

Stanhope's exclusion of women from his description of the intended contents and constituencies of the National Portrait Gallery is one that echoes into present research. Although it is fairly clear that national institutions were administered solely by men while philanthropic organisations were usually administered by both men and women,

⁶The intervention of galleries and museums in class culture might be fruitfully considered in the light of Dror Wahrmann's *Imagining the Middle Class*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), which posits the 'middle-class' as rhetorical category mobilised for political change; understanding the art world as a ground for uniting (rather than dividing) elites of this period could have consequences for art historical studies: a recent work on this period, Diane Sachko Macleod's *Art and the Victorian Middle Class: Money and the Making of Cultural Identity*, (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1996), takes the 'middle-class' and its difference from the 'upper class' as one of its central analytical concepts.

historiographers of museum and gallery administration tend not to address gender as a significant feature of the constitution of these institutions.⁷ The masculinity of national museums and galleries is rarely interrogated, perhaps because it continues to characterise the privileged echelons of museum and gallery culture. Male artists, and in the case of the Portrait Gallery, male sitters, are the dominant features of most museum collections; male administrators the dominant figures in their histories; and the institutions are read as interventions in 'masculine' areas of culture (e.g. the classed nation, or the development of 'adventure' disciplines like anthropology or archaeology). The male and masculine aspects of museums and galleries are those which continue to attract historiographical attention.

Making an enquiry into the role of women in the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery directed attention to what may seem to be peripheral aspects of its history. This thesis surveyed a small proportion (less than ten per cent) of the collection acquired by the nineteenth-century National Portrait Gallery, the portraits of sitters who may seem to have made less than heroic contributions to the 'nation'. It described the role of minor bequests, as much as spectacular purchases, as a formative influence on the collection. It speculated about the role of dinner parties and other social as well as intellectual practices in consolidating the Trustees into a group which could reach collective agreements on the constitution of the collection. Finally, it considered how fashion and sociability - the 'feminine' aspects of using galleries and museums - worked within the economies of spectatorship which structured the use and function of the National Portrait Gallery. Next to the serious business of historical certainties, national budgets, and the heroes (and villains) of constitutional progress, the themes addressed by this thesis may seem minor.

But these themes are not marginal to the history of the Portrait Gallery. The business of the Portrait Gallery depended just as fully on these 'peripheral' activities as it did on the more obvious ones. If

⁷On the South London Gallery, which included a number of women in its administration, see Giles Waterfield, ed., *Art for the People*, (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 1994); also Seth Koven, 'The Whitechapel Picture Exhibitions and the Politics of Seeing', Sherman and Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1994): 23-47

it was not as exciting as a ten-thousand pound Duchess of Devonshire, the offer of a portrait of author Agnes Strickland (NPG 403, figure 45), which was bequeathed by the sitter to the Gallery in 1875, was warmly received. The reasons for that warm reception may have had more to do with the Trustees' appreciation of the role that her series *Lives of the Queens of England* had in their daughters' schoolrooms, than its contribution to the library at the Society of Antiquaries. The portrait was a remarkable addition to the collection, or so thought the reviewer from the *St. James Budget* who attended the opening of the St. Martin's Place Gallery, and commented that 'young ladies who have suffered under the "Queens of England" will recognise with awe "Miss Agnes Strickland".'⁸ Young ladies were a constituency to be reckoned with, even if their interest was in the 'feminine' pleasures to be had in discussing the awesome Miss Strickland's mediievally-styled dress. Those pleasures were just as likely to have been surreptitiously enjoyed by the male experts, if only under the guise of discussing the historical references in the costume she wore for her portrait. Women, and things 'feminine', performed important work in the National Portrait Gallery.

That work has a history. The way that femininity shaped the National Portrait Gallery and its use was not static; the relations between the men who formed and administered the Gallery, and the women around them, changed even within the short period covered by this research. Museums and galleries have a local colour which is shaded by their particular aims and ambitions, and the interests of the people who are commissioned to advance them. Although this work was not structured as a historical narrative, I hope that attention to the Portrait Gallery's wider context, as well as the different generations of its personnel and their historically specific attachments and interests, has given a sense of the Portrait Gallery as a living institution which responded to contemporary debates and events. If the terms masculine and feminine, men and women, persist as categorisations which shape the functions of museums and galleries, the ways that they are configured and the meanings to which they are attached are subject to revision.

⁸*St. James Budget*, 10 April 1896: 6, preserved in *New Building 1889-96*.
Facing Femininities: Conclusion



Figure 45. John Hayes, *Agnes Strickland* (1796-1874)
Canvas, 1846, 92.1 x 71.8, NPG 403

Some of the ways that women and 'feminine' interests structure the function and use of museums today are familiar, if differently handled, from the nineteenth century. Janet de Botton, a Trustee of the Tate Gallery who has recently made an important donation to its collection, is reported to compare her passion for collecting art to her passion for clothing and fashion.⁹ The opening of the Yves St. Laurent Room at the National Gallery was marked in *The Guardian* with a photograph of a the room featuring a model wearing a 'Pop Art' dress from the designer's 1966 collection.¹⁰ And where clothing was once a tool for studying portraiture, portraiture is now used as a tool for studying clothing: in the summer of 1997 the National Portrait Gallery held an exhibition titled 'The Pursuit of Beauty: Five Centuries of Body Adornment in Britain' which featured the portraits and the fashionable practices of both men and women. If these events represent a significant change in the relationships between women, femininity and museums, it is not only a substantive change, but a change in the recognition of women's contributions and the intimate (if problematic) relations between art, museums and (feminised) consumer culture.

Gender relations, and gendered relations, are now (and always) a source of tension and change, and the institutions they shape will change with them. At the end of the twentieth century, the grip of the patriarchal family as a prescriptive model for men and women's personal relationships is being loosened; it is probably not coincidental that the 'nation' as a conceptual model of human relations is simultaneously coming under critical investigation. The 'national', as a concept built on and premised around gender, is as always, being reconceived with those changes. As an institution at the heart of the nation, the National Portrait Gallery, and other national museums and galleries, will inevitably, and as always, need to change with it.

⁹'Fame and Fashion', *Tatler*, March 1998, 298 (3): 136 - 141.

¹⁰*The Guardian*, March 19, 1988: 7.

APPENDIX 1

TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, 1856-1900

Their dates of Trusteeship and names given in order of appointment (date of birth followed by date of death, if not already indicated), and other significant affiliations which primarily relate to discussions of the purposes of the NPG in Chapter one and of portrait selection in Chapter two. In addition to the nominated Trustees, the Lord President of the Council was appointed *ex-officio* to the Board from 1856; in practice they never attended meetings. The President of the Royal Academy was an *ex-officio* appointment to the Board from 1880.

The reason for the end dates of Trusteeships are indicated by r = resigned; v = removed from the Board as penalty for failing to attend for two years; d = died.

Affiliations are abbreviated as follows: MP = Member of Parliament; PM = Prime Minister; BM = British Museum; NG = National Gallery; SA = Society of Antiquaries; RA = Royal Academy; the latter two preceded by F indicates a Fellow; preceded by P indicates a President.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1856 - 1862 (r) | Henry Petty-Fitzmaurice,
3rd Marquess of Lansdowne (1780-1863)
art collector
Parliamentary career from 1808-58 |
| 1856 - 1875 (d)
Chair 1856-75 | Philip Henry, 5th Earl Stanhope (b. 1805)
MP (Cons) 1830-32/33; 1835-52; Lords 1855-
historian
Member Roxburghe Club from 1837
FSA 1841; PSA 1846 - 1875
Select Committee on Arts & Manufactures, 1835-36
Fine Arts Commissioner 1843 - 63
Royal Academy Commission, 1863
Trustee of British Museum 1846 - 75
Antiquary to Royal Academy 1855 - 75
Member of the Royal Commission on Historical
Manuscripts 1869 - 75 |
| 1856 - 1857 (d) | Earl of Ellesmere (b. 1800)
Proprietor of Bridgewater House, which contained a
notable and relatively accessible gallery
Member of Roxburghe Club from 1857
Trustee of National Gallery 1835 - 1857 |

- 1856 - 1867 (v) Evan Charteris, styled Lord Elcho, Earl of Wemyss
from 1888 (1818-1914)
MP (Cons; Lib/Cons. from 1855) 1841-46 & 1847-83
Select Committee on Works of Art, 1848
Select Committee on the National Gallery, 1852-53
(successfully opposed its move to South
Kensington in 1856)
Royal Academy Commission, 1863
family of picture collectors from 18th C.
- 1856 - 1861 (d) Sidney Herbert, First Baron of Lea (b. 1810)
MP (Cons) 1832 - 1860 (very active)
Select Committee on National Gallery, 1850
- 1856 - 1881 (d) Benjamin Disraeli, Lord Beaconsfield (b. 1804)
novelist
MP (Cons) 1837-1876; PM 1867/8 & 1874-80
Conservative Leader in House of Commons from
1848
Chancellor of the Exchequer 1852; 1858/59;
1866-67
Select Committee on Works of Art, 1848
Select Committee on National Gallery, 1850
- 1856 - 1859 (d) Thomas Babington Macaulay (b. 1800)
historian
MP (Lib) 1830 - 34 and 1839 - 56
- 1856 - 1861 (d) Sir Francis Palgrave (b. 1788)
historian & antiquarian
FSA
Deputy Keeper HM's Records, 1838 - 1861
Fellow Royal Society
- 1856 - 1865 (d) Sir Charles Eastlake (b. 1793)
m. Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, collector & author
RA 1828; PRA 1850 - 1865
Keeper (1843-1847); Trustee (1850-55);
| & Director (1855-1865) of the NG
FSA 1842 - 1848
Secretary to Fine Arts Commission, 1841-48
- 1856 - 1876 (d) William Smith (b. 1808)
Deputy Chair 1858 - 1876
Printseller
FSA 1852; Councillor
Art Union of London
- 1856 - 1866 (d) William Hookham (or Hokham) Carpenter (b. 1792)
Keeper of Prints & Drawings, B.M., 1845-1866
m. Margaret Sarah Carpenter (born Geddes),
distinguished portrait painter
biographer and critic
FSA 1862; Councillor
- 1857 - 1881 (d) Thomas Carlyle (b. 1795)
author

- 1859 - 1874 (d) Samuel Wilberforce, the Lord Bishop of Oxford, later the Bishop of Winchester (b. 1805)
active and influential in Lords
- 1859 - 1863 (d) Right Hon. Sir George C. Lewis, Bart. (b. 1806)
Classical scholar
MP (Lib) 1847 - 1853
- 1859 - 1878 (d) Sir William Stirling, later Stirling-Maxwell (b. 1818)
historian
Member of Roxburghe Club from 1846
MP (Con) 1852 - 1868; 1874 - 78
Trustee B.M. 1872-
Trustee NG
Select Committee on the National Gallery, 1852-53
Royal Academy Commission, 1863
Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 1869 - 78
m(2). Caroline Norton
- 1860 - 1895 (r) William Ewart Gladstone (1809-98)
MP (Cons) 1832 - 46; (Lib/Cons) 1847 - 68; (Lib) 1868 - 95
PM 1868 - 74; 1880 - 85; 1886; 1892 - 94
Chancellor of Exchequer 1852 - 5; 1859 - 66; 1873 - 74
antiquarian interests
- 1860 - 1883 (d) Charles Somers-Cocks, Earl Somers (b. 1819)
MP (Cons) 1848 - 69
Trustee BM 1874 - 1883
- 1861 - 1893 (d) Frederic Arthur Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby (b. 1826)
MP (Cons) 1848 - 69
Trustee BM 1866 - 1893
President Royal Literary Fund 1876 - 1893
- 1863 - 1867 (v) Sir Francis Grant (b. 1803)
PRA 1866-1878;
portrait painter of considerable popularity
- 1866 - 1881 (d) Dr. Arthur Penryn Stanley, Dean of Westminster (b. 1815)
Ecclesiastical historian
FSA 1855; Councillor; V.P. 1890-94
- 1866 - 1887 (d) Alexander James Beresford Beresford-Hope (b. 1820)
MP (Cons) 1841 - 52; 1857 - 59; 1865 - 87
Member Roxburghe Club from 1844
Trustee BM 1879 - 87
FSA 1847; Councillor
President Royal Institution of British Architects, 1865 - 68
Select Committee on Ancient Monuments 1877
active in government office building

- 1866 - 1913 (d) Sir Coutts Lindsay (b. 1824)
artist
Co-Founder, with Lady Lindsay also an artist,
of the Grosvenor Gallery, 1877
witness to Royal Academy Commission, 1863
- 1868 - 1894 (d) Viscount Hardinge, Charles Stewart (b. 1822)
Chair 1876 - 94 F.S.A. 1877 - 1892
Trustee National Gallery 1874 - 1894
Select Committee on the National Gallery, 1852-53
Royal Academy Commission, 1863
artist
- 1869 - 1874 (v) 7th Earl Cowper (1834-1905)
Whig politician
- 1874 - 1892 (r) Marquess of Bath (1831 - 1896)
Conservative affiliations
Trustee BM 1883 - 92
FSA 1879
- 1874 - 1916 (d) Lord Ronald Leveson Gower (1834-1916)
artist and writer on artists
FSA 1877 - 1911
- 1876 - 1890 (d) Alex Baillie Cochrane, Baron Lamington (b. 1816)
MP (Cons) 1841 - 46; 1847 - 52; 1859 - 68;
1870 - 80
- 1876 - 1882 (d) Evelyn Philip Shirley (b. 1812)
historian and archaeologist, primarily of Ireland
MP 1841 - 47; 1853 - 65
FSA 1860; Councillor
Member Roxburghe Club from 1839
- 1878 - 1898 (d) Philip Sidney, Baron De L'Isle and Dudley (b. 1828)
Chair 1895 - 98 Conservative
son of Sophia Fitzclarence,
grandson of Dorothy Jordan & William IV
- 1879 - 1890 (d) Sir Richard Wallace Bt. (b. 1818)
MP (Cons) for Lisburn, Ireland 1873-1885
Trustee NG
famous collection opened Bethnal Green
Museum 1872-75
it was later established as the
Wallace Collection by his wife and heir
- 1880 - 1896 (d) Sir Frederick Leighton, later Lord Leighton
of Stretton (b. 1830)
PRA 1880 - 1896
Commissioner of the Great Exhibition
of 1851 from 1879
- 1881 - 1915 (r) Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice (?)
Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts
1869 - 77

- 1882 - 1896 (d) Sir John Everett Millais (b. 1829)
known, at the time of his appointment,
mainly as a portrait painter
RA 1863; PRA 1896
- 1882 - 1893 (d) Edward Stanhope (b. 1840)
second son of Trustee and Chair Fifth Earl Stanhope
MP (Cons) 1874 - 1893; active in War Office
FSA 1873 (not active)
- 1883 - 1887 (r) Reverend William Stubbs, D.D., (b. 1825)
Regius Professor of History at Oxford,
later Bishop of Chester (1884) & Oxford (1888)
medieval historian
- 1887 - 1908 (d) Arthur Wellesley, Viscount Peel (b. 1829)
Chair 1898 - 1908 (Sir Robert, father, FSA & collector)
MP (Lib) 1865- 1895 Speaker 1884-1895
Trustee BM
- 1887 - 1895 (d) George Robert Charles Herbert, Thirteenth Earl
of Pembroke and Montgomery (b. 1850)
son of Trustee Sidney Herbert
- 1890 - 1896 (r) William Henry Alexander (1833 - 1905)
donor of St. Martin's Place Gallery
collector of oriental jewels and curios
- 1891 - 1907 (d) Henry Hucks Gibbs, Baron Aldenham (b. 1819)
MP (Cons) 1891-92
Member Roxburghe Club from 1863
- 1893 - 1920 (r) Charles George Lyttleton, Viscount Cobham (b. 1842)
MP (Lib) 1868 - 74
- 1894 - 1895 (r) Sir Charles Tennant (1823 - 1896)
MP (Lib) 1879-1885
collector
- 1894 - 1930 (r) Harold Arthur, Viscount Dillon (b. 1844)
Chair 1908 - 27 FSA 1873; Councillor; VPSA 1892-95;
PSA 1897-1904
President Royal Archaeological Institute 1892-98
Antiquary to RA, 1903 -
Trustee BM 1905-1912
- 1895 - 1903 (d) William Edward Hartpole Lecky (b. 1838)
historian
- 1895 - 1923 (d) Philip James Stanhope, later Baron Weardale (b. ?)
son of Trustee 5th Earl Stanhope
MP (Cons.) 1886-92; 1893-1900; & 1904-06.
- 1895 - 1923 (r) Lord Ribblesdale (b. 1854)
Liberal Whip in Lords, 1896 - 1907
Trustee of NG
son-in-law of Trustee Charles Tennant

- 1896 - 1899 (r) Mr. Leslie Stephen (1832 - 1904)
Literary biographer
First Editor DNB
- 1896 - 1904 (r) G.F. Watts (1817-1904)
portrait painter, did a series of great contemporaries
substantial donor of his own work to NPG
friend and colleague of Leighton
- 1896 - 1914 (d) Henry Holland, Viscount Knutsford (b. 1825)
MP (Cons) 1874 - 85; 1885 - 88
VP Council of Education (1885 - 87)
- 1895 (d) Sir George Scharf, KCB (b. 1820)
draughtsman and illustrator
retired Secretary & Director of NPG
FSA 1852; Councillor
- 1897 - 1919 (d) Sir John Poynter (b. 1836)
Director for Art SKM 1875 - 1881
PRA 1896-1919
Director of the National Gallery, 1894 -
FSA 1894
- 1898 - 1901 (d) Rt. Hon & Rt. Rev. Mandell Creighton,
Bishop of London (b. 1843)
historian, first editor *English Historical Review*
- 1899 - 1940 (?) David Alexander Edward Lindsay,
styled Lord Balcarres (?)
MP (Cons) 1895 - 1913
FSA 1900 -

APPENDIX 2

PORTRAITS OF WOMEN COLLECTED BY THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, 1856-99

The following are lists of the portraits collected by the National Portrait Gallery from the time it was founded in 1856 until the end of 1899. I excluded portraits which were acquired as single items which formed parts of large collections (namely parts of NPG 316, 202 preliminary drawings by Francis Chantrey acquired in 1871, and parts of NPG 883, 21 preliminary drawings by Sir George Hayter) on the grounds that they were not individually considered and accepted by the Trustees.

Table 2-A is a comprehensive list of the portraits given in order of accession (accn.). The information is arranged as follows:

NPG accn. num.	Name of sitter (* indicates doubtful identity)	category in thesis	date of sitter's death	artist	medium	height in cm.	given or purchased	date of accn.	Chair of Trustees at accn.
36	*Neill Gwyn	beauty	1691	after Lely	canvas	125.7	p	1858	Stanhope

A ? indicates that the date is unknown. Portraits categorised as 'companions' are discussed in Chapter two, section V; portraits categorised as artists are discussed in Chapter 6, section IV. Table 2-B collects the portraits covered in Chapter three, 'Queens and Continuity'; 2-C collects the portraits covered in Chapter four, 'Beauty and beauties; 2-D collects the portraits covered in Chapter five, 'Authors and the (an)aesthetics of intellect'. The key to their arrangement is identical to that of table 2-A except that their 'category' is not indicated. Information collected from K.K. Yung, *National Portrait Gallery Complete Illustrated Catalogue*. (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1981).

Table 2 - A: All portraits of women collected 1856-99

20	Comtesse Grammont, Elizabeth	beauty	1708	Eccardt after Lely	canvas	76.2	p	1857	Stanhope
28	Elizabeth Carter	author	1806	Thomas Lawrence	pastel	31.1	p	1858	Stanhope
36	*Nell Gwyn	beauty	1691	after Lely	canvas	125.7	p	1858	Stanhope
50	Sarah Siddons	beauty	1831	Gilbert Stuart	canvas	74.9	g	1858	Stanhope
51	Elizabeth Stuart	compan.	1799	att. Philip Jean	miniature	5.7	g	1858	Stanhope
55	Princess Charlotte	royal	1817	George Dawe.	canvas	139.7	p	1858	Stanhope
64	*Mary Sidney (unknown sitter)	author	1621	Gheeraerts (unknown)	panel	114.3	p	1859	Stanhope
71	Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia	royal	1662	Miereveldt	panel	69.9	p	1859	Stanhope
111	Anne Carleton	author	1627	after Miereveldt	panel	63.9	g	1860	Stanhope
96	Mary, Queen of Scots	royal	1587	Unknown	canvas	96.2	p	1860	Stanhope
108	Elizabeth I	royal	1603	Hilliard	miniature	5.1	p	1860	Stanhope
96a	Mary, Queen of Scots	royal	1587	Unknown	e. of medal	6.7	g	1860	Stanhope
118	Elizabeth Fry	author	1845	Samuel Drummond	miniature	11.4	p	1861	Stanhope
2665	Anne Countess of Mornington	beauty	1831	Sir Thomas Lawrence	pencil	21.6	g	1861	Stanhope
127	Anne of Denmark	royal	1619	after Paul Van Somer	canvas	62.9	p	1861	Stanhope
163	Catherine of Aragon	royal	1536	Unknown	panel	55.9	p	1863	Stanhope
190	Elizabeth I	royal	1603	att. Hilliard	panel	78.7	p	1865	Stanhope
197	Mary II	royal	1694	after Wissing	canvas	124.5	p	1865	Stanhope
200	Elizabeth I	royal	1603	unknown	panel	65.4	g	1865	Stanhope
203	Elizabeth Talbot, Ctss. of Shrewsbury	royal	1608	unknown	canvas	98.8	p	1865	Stanhope
206	Princess Charlotte	royal	1817	Richard Woodman	watercolour	18.7	g	1866	Stanhope
214	Mary of Modena	royal	1718	Wissing	canvas	120.7	p	1866	Stanhope
215	Queen Anne	royal	1714	Michael Dahl	canvas	125.1	p	1866	Stanhope
224	Charlotte of Mecklenberg Strelitz	royal	1818	Allan Ramsay	canvas	147.3	p	1866	Stanhope
246	Ann Chambers, Countess Temple	author	1777	Hugh Hamilton	pastel	24.1	p	1867	Stanhope
230	Nell Gwyn	beauty	1691	Lely	canvas	?	p	1867	Stanhope
238	Catherine, Duchess of Queensberry	beauty	1777	att. Charles Jervas	canvas	127	p	1867	Stanhope
253	*Mary Davis	beauty	?	after Lely	canvas	125.7	p	1867	Stanhope
227	Henrietta Maria	royal	1669	after Van Dyck	canvas	109.2	p	1867	Stanhope
228	Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans	royal	1670	after Mignard?	canvas	75.7	p	1867	Stanhope

241	Anne Hyde, Duchess of York	royal	1671	after Lely?	canvas	74.3	p	1867	Stanhope
244	Caroline of Brunswick	royal	1821	Thomas Lawrence	canvas	140.3	p	1867	Stanhope
267	Princesses Anne and Elizabeth	royal	1640	after Van Dyck	canvas	89.5	p	1868	Stanhope
280	Anna Maria, Countess of Shrewsbury	beauty	1702	Lely	canvas	74.9	p	1869	Stanhope
291	Elizabeth of York	royal	1503	after Torregiano	e. monument	86.4	p	1869	Stanhope
294	Emma Hamilton	beauty	1815	George Romney	canvas	73.7	p	1870	Stanhope
307	Mary Queen of Scots	royal	1587	after Cure brothers	e. monument	61	g	1870	Stanhope
311	Elizabeth of York	royal	1503	unknown	panel	56.5	p	1870	Stanhope
322	Elizabeth Barrett Browning	author	1861	Field Talfourd	chalk	60.3	g	1871	Stanhope
325	Queen Anne with son	royal	1714	after Kneller	canvas	121.9	p	1871	Stanhope
331	Anne of Bohemia	royal	1394	after Broker, after Prest	e. monument	73.7	p	1871	Stanhope
340	Elizabeth, Princess Palatine	royal	1680	after Honthorst	panel	71.1	p	1872	Stanhope
345	Eleanor of Castile	royal	1290	after Torel	e. monument	108	p	1872	Stanhope
346	Philippa of Hainault	royal	1369	after De Liege	e. monument	43.8	p	1872	Stanhope
353	Catherine of Braganza	royal	1705	after Dirk Stoop	canvas	62.2	p	1872	Stanhope
357	Elizabeth I	royal	1603	after Colte	e. monument	96.5	p	1872	Stanhope
358	Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox	royal	1578	unknown	e. monument	96.5	p	1872	Stanhope
369	Caroline of Ansbach	royal	1737	after Jervas	canvas	218.5	p	1873	Stanhope
377	Louisa, Countess of Albany	royal	1824	att. Hugh Hamilton	canvas	24.1	p	1873	Stanhope
498	Caroline of Brunswick	royal	1821	James Lonsdale	canvas	76.2	g	1873	Stanhope
387	Barbara Villiers, Dss. of Cleveland	beauty	1709	after Lely	canvas	124.5	p	1874	Stanhope
401	Margaret Douglas, Css. of Lennox	royal	1578	unknown	canvas	40.3	g	1874	Stanhope
402	Agnes Strickland	author	1874	John Hayes	canvas	92.1	g	1875	Stanhope
403	Mary Mitford	author	1855	John Lucas after B Haydon	millboard	35.6	p	1875	Stanhope
404	Hannah More	author	1833	Pickersgill	canvas	125.7	p	1875	Stanhope
412	Ann, Ctss. of Pembroke and Montgomery	beauty	1676	unknown	canvas	75.6	g	1875	Stanhope
356	Beaufort, Lady Margaret	royal	1509	after Torregiano	e. monument	88.9	p	1875	Stanhope
398	Joanna of Navarre	royal	1437	after unknown	e. monument	109.2	p	1875	Stanhope
430	Angelica Kauffmann	artist	1807	Kauffmann	canvas	73.7	p	1876	Hardinge
427	*Rachel Russell (Barbara Castlemaine)	author	1723	after Kneller	canvas	124.5	p	1876	Hardinge

415	Margaret, Countess of Cumberland	beauty	1585	unknown	panel	54 g	1876	Hardinge
431	Ann Oldfield	beauty	1730	unknown	canvas	72.4 p	1876	Hardinge
428	Mary I	royal	1558	Master John	panel	71.1 p	1876	Hardinge
429	Mary Queen of Scots	royal	1587	after Hilliard?	panel	79.1 p	1876	Hardinge
445	Lady Eliza Becher	beauty	1872	JJ Masquerier	canvas	76.2 g	1877	Hardinge
446	Elizabeth I	royal	1603	unknown	e. coin	2.5 g	1877	Hardinge
446	Mary I	royal	1558	unknown	e. medal	6.7 g	1877	Hardinge
497	Louise, Dss of Portsmouth	beauty	1734	Mignard	canvas	120.7 p	1878	Hardinge
509	Elizabeth, Comtesse de Grammont	beauty	1708	att. John Greenhill	canvas	141 p	1878	Hardinge
541	Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia	royal	1662	after Honthorst	canvas	66.7 p	1878	Hardinge
594	Anne Seymour Damer	artist	1828	after Reynolds	canvas	54 p	1879	Hardinge
598	Sarah Austin	author	1867	Lady Arthur Russell	panel	18.1 g	1879	Hardinge
570	Elizabeth Vernon, Css. of Southampton	beauty	1648	unknown	panel	73.3 BM	1879	Hardinge
529	Caroline of Ansbach	royal	1737	after Kneller?	canvas	97.5 BM	1879	Hardinge
541	Elizabeth I	royal	1603	after? George Gower	panel	97.8 BM	1879	Hardinge
542	Elizabeth I	royal	1603	unknown	panel	85.1 BM	1879	Hardinge
543	Elizabeth, Princess Palatine	royal	1680	unknown	canvas	76.5 BM	1879	Hardinge
551	Beaufort, Lady Margaret	royal	1509	unknown	panel	68.6 BM	1879	Hardinge
555	Mary, Queen of Scots	royal	1587	after Francis Clouet	canvas	71.1 BM	1879	Hardinge
597	Catherine of Braganza	royal	1705	after Huysmans	canvas	73.7 p	1879	Hardinge
599	Anti-Slavery Society	author	n/a	Haydon	canvas	297.2 g	1880	Hardinge
612	Jane Middleton	beauty	1692	Gerard Soest	canvas	121.3 p	1880	Hardinge
606	Mary II	royal	1694	by or after Wissing	canvas	39.7 p	1880	Hardinge
642	Siddons, Sarah	beauty	1831	Thomas Campbell	marble relief	116.8 g	1881	Hardinge
650	Woffington, Margaret (Peg)	beauty	1760	unknown	canvas	90.2 g	1881	Hardinge
623	*Catherine of Braganza	royal	1705	Gennari	canvas	97.8 p	1881	Hardinge
624	Queen Anne & Knights of the Garter	royal	1714	Peter Angelis	canvas	62.2 p	1881	Hardinge
668	Anne Boleyn	royal	1536	unknown	panel	54.3 p	1882	Hardinge
669	George Eliot (Cross)	author	1880	Frederick Burton	chalk	51.4 g	1883	Hardinge
672	Sarah Austin	author	1867	John Linnell	chalk	52.1 g	1883	Hardinge
689	Anna Jameson	author	1860	John Gibson	marble bust	60 SK	1883	Hardinge
690	Mary Somerville	author	1872	James Swinton	chalk	69.2 g	1883	Hardinge

675	Anne Flaxman		companion.	1820	Henry Howard	panel	19.4 g	1883	Hardinge
708	Queen Victoria		royal	1901	Lady Abercromby	watercolour	145.7 g	1883	Hardinge
712	*Sarah, Dss of Marlborough		beauty	1744	Michael Dahl	canvas	74.9 p	1884	Hardinge
729	Norton (Stirling-Maxwell), Caroline		beauty	1877	Francis J Williamson	plaster bust	54.9 g	1884	Hardinge
711	Buckingham family		companion.	1649	after Honthorst	canvas	145.4 p	1884	Hardinge
754	Elizabeth Fairfax		companion.	1648	Gerard Soest	canvas	139.1 p	1886	Hardinge
765	Amelia Opie		author	1853	John Opie	canvas	74.3 p	1887	Hardinge
760	Rosamon Mountain		beauty	1841	SG after JJ Masquerier	miniature	7.6 g	1887	Hardinge
764	*Jane Grey (Dudley)		royal	1554	unknown	panel	16.5 p	1887	Hardinge
789	Adelaide Procter		author	1864	Emma G Richards	canvas	95.3 g	1888	Hardinge
796	Sarah Trimmer		author	1810	Henry Howard	canvas	90.2 p	1888	Hardinge
803	Anne, Css. of Sunderland		beauty	1716	Kneller	canvas	125.7 g	1888	Hardinge
808	Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland		beauty	1868	Matthew Noble	plaster bust	69.2 g	1888	Hardinge
814	Mary Queen of Scots		royal	1587	after Francois Clouet	photograph		1889	Hardinge
815	Mary Queen of Scots		royal	1587	after Francois Clouet	photograph		1889	Hardinge
998	Grace Darling		heroine	1842	David Dunbar	bust	63.5 g	1890	Hardinge
898	Elizabeth Fry		author	1845	after CR Leslie	panel	23.8 p	1891	Hardinge
856	Jane Hood		companion.	1846	unknown	millboard	30.5 p	1891	Hardinge
858	Queen Victoria		royal	1901	Sir JE Boehm	plaster bust	86.4 p	1891	Hardinge
929	Amelia Ann Edwards		author	1892	Percival Ball	marble bust	63.4 g	1892	Hardinge
904	Jane Franklin		companion.	1875	Amelie Romilly	chalk	15.9 g	1892	Hardinge
952	Elizabeth Claypole		beauty	1658	John Michael Wright	panel	54 p	1893	no chair
954	Maria Callcott		author	1842	Thomas Lawrence	canvas	59.7 g	1894	Lindsay
977	Ann Mary Newton		artist	1866	Ann Mary Newton	canvas	61 g	1895	DeL'Isle
990	Christina and Frances Rossetti		author	1894	DG Rossetti	chalk	42.5 g	1895	DeL'Isle
1019	Mary and Charles Lamb		author	1847	F S Cary	canvas	113 g	1895	DeL'Isle
976	Princess Louisa M T Stuart		royal	1712	de Largilliere	canvas	192.8 g	1895	DeL'Isle
999	the Trial of Queen Caroline		royal	1821	George Hayter	canvas	233 g	1895	DeL'Isle
1030	Mary Delany		author	1788	John Opie	canvas	74.9 g	1896	DeL'Isle
1046	Felicia Hemans		author	1835	Angus Fletcher	plaster bust	70.5 p	1896	DeL'Isle
1041	Georgiana, Dss. of Devonshire		beauty	1806	Joshua Reynolds	canvas	58.4 g	1896	DeL'Isle
1081	Amelia Opie,		author	1853	PJ D'Angers	medallion	13.3 g	1897	DeL'Isle

1085	Harriet Martineau	author	1876	Richard Evans	canvas	127.6 p	1897	Del'Isle
1106	Eliza Gibson (group with family)	author	1856	George Romney	canvas	135.2 g	1897	Del'Isle
1108	Jane Porter	author	1850	GH Harlow	pencil	21.6 p	1897	Del'Isle
1109	Anna Maria Porter	author	1832	GH Harlow	pencil	24.1 p	1897	Del'Isle
1144	Elizabeth Inchbald	author	1821	George Dance	pencil	25.4 p	1898	Peel
1151	Hester Lynch Piozzi	author	1821	George Dance	pencil	24.8 p	1898	Peel
1175	Jane Baillie Carlyle	author	1866	Samuel Laurence	canvas	20 g	1898	Peel
1177	Lady Sydney Morgan	author	1859	William Behnes	pen and ink	18.4 g	1898	Peel
1119	Catherine Howard	royal	1542	after H Holbein	panel	73.7 p	1898	Peel
1173	Margaret Queen of Scotland	royal	1541	Jean Perreal	panel	44.1 p	1898	Peel
1232	George Eliot (Cross)	author	1880	Caroline Bray	watercolour	17.8 g	1899	Peel
1235	Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley	author	1851	Richard Rothwell	canvas	73.7 g	1899	Peel
1237	Mary Wollstonecraft (Godwin)	author	1797	John Opie	canvas	76.8 g	1899	Peel

Table 2 - B: Portraits of queens and royal women

55	Princess Charlotte	1817	George Dawe	canvas	139.7 p	1858	Stanhope
71	Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia	1662	Miereveldt	panel	69.9 p	1859	Stanhope
96	Mary, Queen of Scots	1587	Unknown	canvas	96.2 p	1860	Stanhope
108	Elizabeth I	1603	Hilliard	miniature	5.1 p	1860	Stanhope
96a	Mary, Queen of Scots	1587	Unknown	electrotype of .medal	6.7 g	1860	Stanhope
127	Anne of Denmark	1619	after Paul Van Somer	canvas	62.9 p	1861	Stanhope
163	Catherine of Aragon	1536	Unknown	panel	55.9 p	1863	Stanhope
190	Elizabeth I	1603	att. Hilliard	panel	78.7 p	1865	Stanhope
197	Mary II	1694	after Wissing	canvas	124.5 p	1865	Stanhope
200	Elizabeth I	1603	unknown	panel	65.4 g	1865	Stanhope
203	Elizabeth Talbot, Ctss. of Shrewsbury	1608	unknown	canvas	98.8 p	1865	Stanhope
206	Princess Charlotte	1817	Richard Woodman	watercolour	18.7 g	1866	Stanhope
214	Mary of Modena	1718	Wissing	canvas	120.7 p	1866	Stanhope
215	Queen Anne	1714	Michael Dahl	canvas	125.1 p	1866	Stanhope
224	Charlotte of Mecklenberg Strelitz	1818	Allan Ramsay	canvas	147.3 p	1866	Stanhope
227	Henrietta Maria	1669	after Van Dyck	canvas	109.2 p	1867	Stanhope
228	Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans	1670	after Mignard?	canvas	75.7 p	1867	Stanhope
241	Anne Hyde, Duchess of York	1671	after Lely?	canvas	74.3 p	1867	Stanhope
244	Caroline of Brunswick	1821	Thomas Lawrence	canvas	140.3 p	1867	Stanhope
267	Princesses Anne and Elizabeth	1640	after Van Dyck	canvas	89.5 p	1868	Stanhope
291	Elizabeth of York	1503	after Torregiano	e. monument	86.4 p	1869	Stanhope
307	Mary Queen of Scots	1587	after Cure brothers	e. monument	61 g	1870	Stanhope
311	Elizabeth of York	1503	unknown	panel	56.5 p	1870	Stanhope
325	Queen Anne with son	1714	after Kneller	canvas	121.9 p	1871	Stanhope
331	Anne of Bohemia	1394	after Broker, after Prest	e. monument	73.7 p	1871	Stanhope
340	Elizabeth, Princess Palatine	1680	after Honthorst	panel	71.1 p	1872	Stanhope
345	Eleanor of Castile	1290	after Torel	e. monument	108 p	1872	Stanhope
346	Philippa of Hainault	1369	after De Liege	e. monument	43.8 p	1872	Stanhope

353	Catherine of Braganza	1705	after Dirk Stoop	canvas					
357	Elizabeth I	1603	after Colte	e. monument	62.2 p	1872	Stanhope		
358	Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox	1578	unknown	e. monument	96.5 p	1872	Stanhope		
369	Caroline of Ansbach	1737	after Jervas	canvas	218.5 p	1873	Stanhope		
377	Louisa, Countess of Albany	1824	att. Hugh Hamilton	canvas	24.1 p	1873	Stanhope		
498	Caroline of Brunswick	1821	James Lonsdale	canvas	76.2 g	1873	Stanhope		
401	Margaret Douglas, Css. of Lennox	1578	unknown	canvas	40.3 g	1874	Stanhope		
356	Beaufort, Lady Margaret	1509	after Torregiano	e. monument	88.9 p	1875	Stanhope		
398	Joanna of Navarre	1437	after unknown	e. monument	109.2 p	1875	Stanhope		
428	Mary I	1558	Master John	panel	71.1 p	1876	Hardinge		
429	Mary Queen of Scots	1587	after Hilliard?	panel	79.1 p	1876	Hardinge		
446	Elizabeth I	1603	unknown	e. coin	2.5 g	1877	Hardinge		
446	Mary I	1558	unknown	e. medal	6.7 g	1877	Hardinge		
541	<i>Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia</i>	1662	after Honthorst	canvas	66.7 p	1878	Hardinge		
529	Caroline of Ansbach	1737	after Kneller?	canvas	97.5 BM	1879	Hardinge		
541	Elizabeth I	1603	after? George Gower	panel	97.8 BM	1879	Hardinge		
542	Elizabeth I	1603	unknown	panel	85.1 BM	1879	Hardinge		
543	Elizabeth, Princess Palatine	1680	unknown	canvas	76.5 BM	1879	Hardinge		
551	Beaufort, Lady Margaret	1509	unknown	panel	68.6 BM	1879	Hardinge		
555	Mary, Queen of Scots	1587	after Francis Clouet	canvas	71.1 BM	1879	Hardinge		
597	Catherine of Braganza	1705	after Huysmans	canvas	73.7 p	1879	Hardinge		
606	Mary II	1694	by or after Wissing	canvas	39.7 p	1880	Hardinge		
623	*Catherine of Braganza	1705	Gennari	canvas	97.8 p	1881	Hardinge		
624	Queen Anne & Knights of the Garter	1714	Peter Angelis	canvas	62.2 p	1881	Hardinge		
668	Anne Boleyn	1536	unknown	panel	54.3 p	1882	Hardinge		
708	Queen Victoria	1901	Lady Abercromby	watercolour	145.7 g	1883	Hardinge		
764	*Jane Grey (Dudley)	1554	unknown	panel	16.5 p	1887	Hardinge		
814	Mary Queen of Scots	1587	after Francois Clouet	photograph	g	1889	Hardinge		
815	Mary Queen of Scots	1587	after Francois Clouet	photograph	g	1889	Hardinge		
858	Queen Victoria	1901	Sir JE Boehm	plaster bust	86.4 p	1891	Hardinge		
976	Princess Louisa M T Stuart	1712	de Largilliere	canvas	192.8 g	1895	DeL'Isle		

999	the Trial of Queen Caroline	1821	George Hayter	canvas	233	g	1895	DeL'Isle
1119	Catherine Howard	1542	after H Holbein	panel	73.7	p	1898	Peel
1173	Margaret Queen of Scotland	1541	Jean Perreal	panel	44.1	p	1898	Peel

Table 2-C: Beauties

20	Comtesse Grammont, Elizabeth	1708	Eccardt after Lely	canvas	1857	Stanhope
36	*Nell Gwyn (unknown sitter)	1691	after Lely	canvas	1858	Stanhope
50	Sarah Siddons	1831	Gilbert Stuart	canvas	1858	Stanhope
2665	Anne Countess of Mornington	1831	Sir Thomas Lawrence	pencil	1861	Stanhope
230	Nell Gwyn	1691	Lely	canvas	?	1867 Stanhope
238	Catherine, Duchess of Queensberry	1777	att. Charles Jervas	canvas	127	1867 Stanhope
253	*Mary Davis (unknown sitter)	?	after Lely	canvas	125.7	1867 Stanhope
280	Anna Maria, Countess of Shrewsbury	1702	Lely	canvas	74.9	1869 Stanhope
294	Emma Hamilton	1815	George Romney	canvas	73.7	1870 Stanhope
387	Barbara Villiers, Dss. of Cleveland	1709	after Lely	canvas	124.5	1874 Stanhope
415	Margaret, Countess of Cumberland	1585	unknown	panel	54	1876 Hardinge
431	Ann Oldfield	1730	unknown	canvas	72.4	1876 Hardinge
445	Lady Eliza Becher	1872	JJ Masquerier	canvas	76.2	1877 Hardinge
497	Louise, Dss of Portsmouth	1734	Mignard	canvas	120.7	1878 Hardinge
509	*Elizabeth, Comtesse de Grammont	1708	att. John Greenhill	canvas	141	1878 Hardinge
570	Elizabeth Vernon, Css. of Southampton	1648	unknown	panel	73.3	1879 Hardinge
612	Jane Middleton	1692	Gerard Soest	canvas	121.3	1880 Hardinge
642	Sarah Siddons	1831	Thomas Campbell	marble	116.8	1881 Hardinge
650	Margaret (Peg) Woffington	1760	unknown	canvas	90.2	1881 Hardinge
712	*Sarah, Dss of Marlborough	1744	Michael Dahl	canvas	74.9	1884 Hardinge
729	Caroline Norton (Stirling-Maxwell)	1877	Francis J Williamson	plaster bust	54.9	1884 Hardinge
760	Rosamon Mountain	1841	SG after JJ Masquerier	miniature	7.6	1887 Hardinge
803	Anne, Css. of Sunderland	1716	Kneller	canvas	125.7	1888 Hardinge
808	Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland	1868	Matthew Noble	plaster bust	69.2	1888 Hardinge
952	Elizabeth Claypole	1658	John Michael Wright	panel	54	1893 no chair
1041	Georgiana, Dss. of Devonshire	1806	Joshua Reynolds	canvas	58.4	1896 Del'Isle
412	Ann, Ciss. of Pembroke and Montgomery	1676	unknown	canvas	75.6	1875 Stanhope

Table 2-D: Authors

28	Carter, Elizabeth	1806	Thomas Lawrence	pastel	31.1	p	1858	Stanhope
64	*Mary Sidney	1621	Gheeraerts (unknown)	panel	114.3	p	1859	Stanhope
111	Carleton, Anne	1627	after Miereveldt	panel	63.9	g	1860	Stanhope
118	Elizabeth Fry	1845	Samuel Drummond	miniature	11.4	p	1861	Stanhope
246	Ann Chambers, Countess Temple	1777	Hugh Hamilton	pastel	24.1	p	1867	Stanhope
322	Elizabeth Barrett Browning	1861	Field Talfourd	chalk	60.3	g	1871	Stanhope
402	Agnes Strickland	1874	John Hayes	canvas	92.1	g	1875	Stanhope
403	Mary Mitford	1855	John Lucas after B Haydon	millboard	35.6	p	1875	Stanhope
404	Hannah More	1833	Pickersgill	canvas	125.7	p	1875	Stanhope
427	*Rachel Russell	1723	after Kneller	canvas	124.5	p	1876	Hardinge
598	Sarah Austin	1867	Lady Arthur Russell	panel	18.1	g	1879	Hardinge
599	Anti-Slavery Society	n/a	Haydon	canvas	297.2	g	1880	Hardinge
669	George Eliot (Cross)	1880	Frederick Burton	chalk	51.4	g	1883	Hardinge
672	Sarah Austin	1867	John Linnell	chalk and pencil	52.1	g	1883	Hardinge
689	Anna Jameson	1860	John Gibson	marble bust	60	g	1883	Hardinge
690	Mary Somerville	1872	James Swinton	chalk	69.2	g	1883	Hardinge
765	Amelia Opie	1853	John Opie	canvas	74.3	p	1887	Hardinge
789	Adelaide Procter	1864	Emma G Richards	canvas	95.3	g	1888	Hardinge
796	Sarah Trimmer	1810	Henry Howard	canvas	90.2	p	1888	Hardinge
898	Elizabeth Fry	1845	after CR Leslie	panel	23.8	p	1891	Hardinge
929	Amelia Ann Edwards	1892	Percival Ball	marble bust	63.4	g	1892	Hardinge
954	Maria Callcott	1842	Thomas Lawrence	canvas	59.7	g	1894	Lindsay
990	Christina and Frances Rossetti	1894	DG Rossetti	chalk	42.5	g	1895	DeL'Isle
1019	Mary and Charles Lamb	1847	F S Cary	canvas	113	g	1895	DeL'Isle
1030	Mary Delany	1788	John Opie	canvas	74.9	g	1896	DeL'Isle
1046	Felicia Hemans	1835	Angus Fletcher	plaster bust	70.5	p	1896	DeL'Isle
1081	Amelia Opie	1853	PJ D'Angers	medallion	13.3	g	1897	DeL'Isle

1085	Harriet Martineau	1876	Richard Evans					
1106	Eliza Gibson, (group with family)	1856	George Romney	canvas	127.6 p	1897	DeL'Isle	
1108	Jane Porter	1850	GH Harlow	canvas	135.2 g	1897	DeL'Isle	
1109	Anna Maria Porter	1832	GH Harlow	pencil	21.6 p	1897	DeL'Isle	
1144	Elizabeth Inchbald	1821	George Dance	pencil	24.1 p	1897	DeL'Isle	
1151	Hester Lynch Piozzi	1821	George Dance	pencil	25.4 p	1898	Peel	
1175	Jane Baillie Carlyle	1866	Samuel Laurence	pencil	24.8 p	1898	Peel	
1177	Lady Sydney Morgan	1859	William Behnes	canvas	20 g	1898	Peel	
1232	George Eliot (Cross)	1880	Caroline Bray	pen and ink	18.4 g	1898	Peel	
1235	Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley	1851	Richard Rothwell	watercolour	17.8 g	1899	Peel	
1237	Mary Wollstonecraft (Godwin)	1797	John Opie	canvas	73.7 g	1899	Peel	
				canvas	76.8 g	1899	Peel	

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